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# the ARMENIAN

Review

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A  
JOURNEY TO  
NEW  
JULFA  
COLONEL GEORGE JUSKALIAN

POETRY  
SHORT STORIES  
ARTICLES OF  
LASTING INTEREST

VOL. XIII, NO. 1—49  
SPRING, MAY, 1960

## THE ARMENIAN REVIEW

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# THE ARMENIAN REVIEW

SPRING, MAY, 1960

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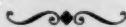
# the **ARMENIAN** *Review*

VOLUME THIRTEEN, NUMBER 1-49

• SPRING, MAY, 1960

## NEW METHODS OF WARFARE AGAINST THE ARMENIAN REVOLUTIONARY FEDERATION

REUBEN DARBINIAN



In the initial stages of the Sovietization of Armenia the Communists had counted heavily on the so-called "Dashnak leftists" who were pushed to the fore with the idea of wrecking the Dashnak organization through co-operation with the Soviet government. However, the Communists gained nothing from this venture and as it was to be expected the leftist Dashnaks suddenly disappeared.

Thereafter the Communists began to hobnob with the Ramgavars, the Hunchaks and the Armenian General Benevolent Union in the free world. The idea was to enlist them in the fight against the Dashnaks. Being masters of Armenia, the Communists made the idea of "devotion to Ar-

menia" their monopoly, as well as the monopoly of the above-mentioned coalition. The new stratagem was based on the false identification of Armenia with the Soviet, the corollary being, "He who wages war against the Soviet regime is an enemy of Armenia."

The Communists soon saw that these anti-Dashnak factions, despite their unbridled exploitation of "devotion to Armenia", were unable to destroy or even weaken the Dashnak organization and therefore they decided to use the Church for this purpose. Thus the authority of Etchmiadzin, sanctified by the tradition of centuries, became a part of the Soviet apparatus. But then something happened

which neither themselves nor their anti-Dashnak confederates had expected.

This was the revolt of the freedom loving Armenians of the free world, the champions of the independence of the Armenian Church, against the unscrupulous exploitation of the authority of Etchmiadzin by Soviet atheists.

The revolt succeeded in rescuing the historic hierarchy of the Illustrious House of Cilicia by placing on its throne an independent-minded Catholicos in the person of Archbishop Zareh A. Payaslian. The new Catholicos, of course, was completely free of Soviet influence. As a result of this revolt, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, the uncompromising defender of of a free Armenia and the free Armenian Church, not only was not weakened but gained considerable strength.

As it appears, even this last failure did not dismay the Communists, and, for some time, they have started to use new methods to disrupt and to destroy the Dashnak organization. On the one hand, the Communist Cheka (MVD), through underhanded and underground methods having got hold of some confidential correspondence among a few Dashnak leaders, has published these stolen letters in its lackey press with the idea of promoting personal feuds and internal discord in the Dashnak organization. On the other hand, it incites those individuals who have been expelled from the Dashnak organization, or those who have voluntarily left, to brand the old organization as "controlled by the Bureau", and to speak in the name of true Dashnaks. The basic aim, once again, is to destroy the organization.

The spokesman of this type of turncoats is one Khosrov Tutunjian, an expelled Dashnak who, in his pamphlet published a year ago, and in his recent series of articles published in a Middle East newspaper called *Nayiri*, has adopted a far

more clever method of weakening the Dashnak organization.

Unlike the other anti-Dashnak secret Commies, he does not deny the glorious past record of the Federation, on the contrary he extols the Dashnak services to the Armenian people, extols its great heroes and late political leaders from the old generation. Moreover, he even justifies the Dashnak press' criticism of the crimes of the Soviet dictatorship, with this difference that he places the entire onus of the Soviet regime on the Stalins and the Berias. He does this to win the sympathy of the Dashnak masses and to pave the way psychologically for what he really has to say to them, because what he has to say does not basically differ with what the Ramgavars, the Hunchaks, the AGBU leaders and other secret Commies have rehashed countless times with a very slight variation.

The difference is, while the other anti-Dashnak factions consider the present Soviet regime in Armenia as free and indigenous, the best which any people may have in the fatherland, this new type of foe does not agree with them but admits that the Soviet regime is tyrannical and alien. But, like the others, he, too, insists that Armenia cannot, and should not be independent but must permanently tie its fate with Russia, no matter what the regime.

"It were time that, in the name of national retrenchment, and for the sake of the Dashnak organization, the leadership of which is sold to the West shall not be identified with the party, and the organization, having shed the Bureau's yoke, in conformity with the consistent Dashnak outlook, come forward in its true character, to preserve its role and place in our public life."

These are the words of the man who has been expelled from the Dashnak Party but

who still considers himself a "true Dashnak".

This attempt to separate the Dashnak Bureau (ARF Supreme Executive) from the mass of the organization is obviously based on a distortion of the democratic structure of the Dashnak organization.

First, the Dashnak Bureau, or the Bureau leadership, as our new critic asserts, is not a self-appointed body but is elected by the overwhelming (at least two thirds) majority of the delegates to the ARF Congress which is drawn from all the Dashnaks and the party units of the world. Therefore, separating the Bureau from the party following is absolutely baseless and unjust. The Bureau is merely the medium of expression of the will, the dispositions and the aspirations of the following. Its power is merely moral, based on the party's world outlook, its traditions and principles and laws, as well as the will of the majority of its followers.

Second, the Dashnak organization is a democratic party whose policies are decided, not by the Bureau, but by the ARF World Congress consisting of the duly-elected delegates from all regions, all organizational units and the entire party membership.

Therefore, the policy which the party follows with its press and pulpit and its current activity is not only the policy of the Bureau, but the policy of the entire Dashnak organization.

Third, if the Dashnak organization today is with the free West and the free world, and not with the dictatorial Soviet Union, that fact does not stem from the whim of the Bureau or because the Bureau "is sold to the West", but derives from the will, traditions and the ideas of entire Dashnak following. This decision was once again emphatically asserted in the recent world congress of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation.

Finally, men who accuse the Dashnak leaders for having been sold to the West, something which is an absolute slander and mere repetition of communist lies, would have been better if they were not themselves working under the far stronger suspicion that they are sold to the Soviet Government.

In view of the preceding considerations we can state without reservation that the men who speak so vehemently against the "Bureau leadership" and who pose as the only "true Dashnaks" pursue no other purpose but the destruction of the Dashnak organization, or strive to make the Dashnak organization another tool of the Soviet dictatorship whose imperialistic aim they wittingly and unwittingly serve, trying to justify their course in the eyes of the Armenian people with vain arguments.

If the Armenian people were to follow such logic they would have to reconcile themselves with the idea that Armenia is forever doomed to be a Russian or Soviet colony. But no people which wants to live as a nation, which wants to develop its national culture, which wants to preserve its national individuality and dignity, will be willing to resign its aspiration to a free and independent fatherland. This is all the more difficult for the Armenian people who boast of a glorious, as well as a free and independent past.

And if today the wild and semi-wild tribes of backward Asia and Africa strive, and often succeed in liberating themselves from Western imperialism and become free and independent states one after another, by what logic can we expect that a people like the Armenians, politically developed, and possessors of a high culture, will cease to strive to free itself from Soviet imperialism, doomed to remain a perpetual Russian colony?

To defend such an absurd and slavish notion would mean to have a very pitiful

opinion of the capacities and the character of the Armenian people, and especially in regard to its will to defend itself. Why imagine that the Armenian people will always fall into the unfavorable circumstances of 1915, 1918 or 1920? Why necessarily think that the Armenian tragedy of the past shall always be repeated? Why not, on the contrary, expect that the conditions of the past will never be repeated identically but inevitably will be changed? Moreover, there are cogent reasons which support the latter view. The Armenian people are not alone today to defend their cause, they have plenty of company, great and small nations some of which share their fate while the others, although free and independent, are striving to destroy the monstrous power of the Soviet tyranny which threatens the whole of mankind.

The upstart secret Communists will gain nothing by pretending to believe that the Dashnaks are trying to restore the conditions of 1918 or 1920. Such an absurd reference can only stem from malice, or a miscomprehension of the international situation, and the trend of history, or the lack of imagination. To aspire to the freedom and the independence of Armenia never means striving for the restoration of the tragic conditions of 1918 and 1920.

Of course no one can foresee the specific conditions under which Armenia once again can be free and independent, but it can confidently be stated that this thing will take place some day, and perhaps not in the too far distant future, because mankind steadily proceeds toward freedom and not toward a new kind of slavery. And when that comes about, the conditions will be far more favorable for the Armenians than they were in 1918 and 1920.

#### **The Attitude of the Russians Toward the Armenian Case**

"The evolution of the Soviet regime in

which we have reposed our hopes for the realization of our national aspirations—a united, free and independent Armenia—will be retarded, some perhaps will say, and perhaps the observation is proper. But we prefer the present semi-independence and the comparative lack of freedom to the menace of Turkish extermination and we repel Reuben Darbinian's formula of first independence and then territorial integration which will prove Armenia's grave under Turkish domination."

This is the view of the man who has found refuge in Nayiri, and perhaps it is the view of the Nayiri editor.

Apparently the writer himself does not seriously believe in the peaceful evolution of the Soviet regime in the near future, and if he were honest he would not believe even in the remote future. Indeed, he who is familiar with the history of nations knows that no despotism has ever been converted into a free democracy by evolutionary process or by peaceful means. All despotisms have been overthrown by popular uprising or revolutionary means. The Soviet despotism whose very nature cannot tolerate any form of freedom and which can preserve its existence only through total tyranny cannot escape this historical truth.

Therefore, it is the height of naiveté to think that the Soviet regime will ever evolve into a free democracy by evolution or peaceful means, that she will grant Armenia her independence, or will ever restore the Turkish Armenian provinces.

By saying this, we do not necessarily mean that a change toward a free regime in the Soviet Union is impossible. On the contrary, we believe that a change is inevitable. But such change will come about, not through conformity nor through co-operation with the Soviet dictatorship as suggested in the pages of Nayiri, but through the passive and active resistance

of the people, as well as through an organized struggle.

Only the gullible American, European and Armenian tourists, returning from Armenia, can tell us that the people are satisfied with the Soviet regime. The information from far more reliable sources, as well as the logic of the unexampled communist tyranny lead us to believe that all the peoples of the Soviet Union are dissatisfied and that, the minute the conditions favor, they will rise in rebellion and will overthrow the hated regime.

The true feeling of the peoples of the Soviet Union came to the fore in the last war when several millions of the Red army and their officers who without resistance or after a token resistance fell captive to the German armies, and later, two million of them under the command of General Vlasov fought against the Bolsheviks. And no doubt, if the Nazi rule were no less detestable than that of the Bolsheviks, and if they had followed a more liberal policy, today not even a trace of the Soviet would have been left.

It is curious that this very man who, in such a devious manner has tied himself to the Soviet chariot, would have his readers believe that Armenia, although at present "enslaved", nevertheless is a "semi-independent" state. The unfortunate fact is, that Armenia today is but a colony of Russia, with not even an iota of a semblance of independence. Everything in Armenia, as in the whole of the Soviet Union, is subject to the Central Committee of the All-Russian Communist Party, or to dictator Khrushchev, to be exact, as was the case under Stalin. And as Stalin, with a single stroke of the pen, could wipe off six autonomous republics from the face of the map, as he did during the war, so Khrushchev, or his successor, can do the same thing to "semi-independent" Armenia.

Only political infants cannot understand

that the Armenian communists at the head of the government today are nothing but the humble and obedient agents of Moscow who, should they deviate in the slightest from the line drawn by Moscow, are in danger of losing their heads, as many of them did. And there can be no doubt that the people of Armenia have no voice whatsoever in the government of their country.

It is interesting to note, however, that the same Khosrov Tutunjian who wants to preserve the present "enslaved" and "semi-independent" state of Armenia is hopeful that, with the evolution of the Soviet regime the integration and the independence of Armenia will become possible. In that case, it must be supposed, "the Turkish menace" will have been lifted.

In other words, according to Tutunjian, if Armenia with her present limited area becomes independent she will be under the "Turkish menace", but once she becomes united and independent, the "Turkish menace" will disappear. This, of course, is sheer sophistry.

An integrated Armenia can only be formed by the annexation of at least some of Turkish Armenian territories. And when, on top of this, Armenia becomes independent, will not the "menace of Turkish extermination" be even greater than when Armenia becomes independent before her unification?

By what sort of reasoning can it be concluded that if Armenia cannot exist as an independent state without the territories which now are occupied by Turkey and necessarily must rely on powerful Russia as her colony, that very same Armenia, when united and independent, will no longer need to remain a colony of Russia?

Is it not plain that the man who, because of the "Turkish menace", relies on Russia cannot give Armenia her independence, especially after her historic territories have



been wrested from Turkey? Is it not plain that, in such a case, Armenia all the more will need the protection of Russia against a far more exacerbated Turkey?

Unfortunately, Russia not only has nothing to gain by giving Armenia her independence but far less by creating a united Armenia. That was true of Tsarist Russia and the same is true of Soviet Russia. In this respect there will be not much difference with a democratic Russia when some day the Soviet regime is overthrown.

It is the height of gullibility to think that any Russian regime will want to recapture the Armenian territories from Turkey in order to annex them to Armenia, far less to an independent Armenia.

First of all, the historical facts, either Tsarist or Soviet, prove that Russia in no wise is interested in creating a United Armenia. Who does not recall the words of Lobanoff Rostovsky, the spokesman of the Tsarist Government: "We want the Turkish Armenian territories without the Armenians"? Who does not recall that, at the outset of World War I, the Tsarist Government dissolved the Armenian Volunteer bands and tried to populate the Turkish Armenian provinces with Russian and Ukrainian Cossacks?

True, in the first days of the Soviet takeover, in a special *ukase*, Lenin promised perfect freedom to Turkish Armenia. But that was only a paper promise, because at the same time he was wrecking the Russian armies occupying the Turkish Armenian provinces through his countless agents and ordering them to come home. He was doing this well knowing that the Armenians were not yet ready and did not have at that time sufficient forces to prevent the Turkish armies from reoccupying the Armenian provinces.

Finally, if the Soviet Government had any interest or intention to create a united Armenia, first of all she would have has-

tened to make an end of a grievous injustice. She would have tried to separate Akhalkalak, Karabagh, Mountainous Gandzak and Nakhichevan, Armenian provinces, from Georgia and Azerbaijan and would have annexed them to Armenia. The Soviet did not do this, nor will ever do, because she is absolutely opposed to the Armenian national state, as well as she is opposed to the national aspirations of all the peoples under her rule. She even already tries to populate the Baltic and Trans-Caspian non-Russian republics with Russians and other alien elements to disfigure their national character and to stifle their political aspirations. Therefore, we shall not be surprised in the least, if the Soviet regime lasts long, that the Soviet will try to fill also the Transcaucasian republics, and especially Armenia, with Russians and other nationals to tip the numerical superiority of the Azerbaijani, the Georgians and the Armenians in their own homelands, not to speak of the systematic Russification of these people.

The situation will be no different if Russia becomes a free democratic country. A glance at the leadership and the press of anti-communist democratic Russian factions of the free world is enough to show that even the most liberal-minded Russian is violently opposed to the idea of the secession and the independence of Ukraina, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia.

The united and indivisible Russia which today is called the Soviet Union is the basis of the political creed of all Great Russians.

### The Champion of Defeatist Mentality

"Armenia," says the same writer, "is not even a Yugoslavia to shed off the Moscow yoke, nor an Hungary whose experiment of 1956 was stifled in blood. Nor she is a Bulgaria, or Romania or Czechoslovakia or a Poland. Their national existence is under no threat with the lifting of the Russian

domination. Whereas, a similar revolution in Transcaucasia will be a veritable national calamity for the Armenians, because the inevitable alternative will be the Turkish supremacy, the massacres and the destruction of 1917, 1918 and 1920."

As we see, the man who expresses these ideas cannot conceive the independence of Armenia except in terms of 1917-1918 or 1920. The fact is, history never repeats itself and if someday Armenia should again be independent, that will happen under entirely different circumstances.

Moreover, it should not be forgotten that, if the Soviet regime is permanently to be removed, that will take place in *Russia proper* which is the main stronghold of that regime. As long as the Soviet regime is intact in the principal centers of Russia proper, any attempt at revolution in the non-Russian regions of the Soviet Union is doomed to failure.

This is an elementary truth today, clearly understood by all the Russian and non-Russian political leaders and factions which are waging a relentless war against the Soviet dictatorship, including the Armenian Revolutionary Federation. Therefore, no one is trying to bring about a separate revolution in Transcaucasia. But if a revolution should take place in Russia proper, there inevitably will also be a revolution in the Transcaucasus even if the Armenian Revolutionary Federation and the Georgian and Azerbaijani anti-Soviet organizations should oppose such a revolution.

It must be plain even to political infants that when a revolution breaks out in the centers of Soviet Russia, as was the case with Tsarist Russia in 1917, the Russian armies and the Cheka in the non-Russian republics will disintegrate and return home. But when that takes place, it will be the end of Soviet rule because the main and the sole prop of the Soviet rule are the Russian troops and the Russian Cheka.

In all probability the revolution will be elemental, as was the case in 1917.

So that, any revolution which may or will take place in Transcaucasia in no wise will depend upon the policy of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, nor the Georgian and Azerbaijani anticommunist organizations of the expatriation. Therefore, if tragic events should follow in the wake of such revolution which is very likely, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation cannot be responsible for it under any circumstances.

Now, if the Soviet regime is overthrown in Russia proper and is overthrown in Transcaucasia, and all the Transcaucasian peoples at all cost organize their independent states, how can the Armenian people, even if opposed to independence, form the exception and invite upon herself the enmity of the neighboring peoples (Georgia, Azerbaijan) by striving to retain her ties with Russia? The Armenian people cannot follow a different policy from her neighbors, as they could not in 1918-1920.

It should be borne in mind that Armenia does not have a common border with Russia. Georgia and Azerbaijan separate her from northern Caucasus which means separation from Russia. In the south-east, Armenia's immediate neighbor is Turkey. The Soviet Armenia does not have a common border even with Persia because the intervening Armenian province of Nakhitchevan was turned by the Bolsheviks over to Azerbaijan, which has no common border with that province.

Thus, present Armenia is surrounded by independent Turkey on the one side, and on the other by Georgia and Azerbaijan which strive to independence. But both these two nations have no fear of being exterminated by the Turks in case they secede from Russia proper. Therefore, at the first opportunity, they will try to recover their independence as they did in

1918. As to the Armenians, although at the time they thought it inopportune to separate from Russia and to proclaim their independence, still they were forced to follow suit because they could do nothing to prevent the secession of their neighbors to enable adherence to Russia.

It is self explanatory that, as in the past so in the future, when favorable circumstances are created for the independence of the Caucasian peoples, the Armenian people will again be unable to stick with Russia over the opposition of their neighbors but will be forced to follow a similar policy if they want to survive within the boundaries which geography has prescribed for them.

If the Jews had followed the reasoning of the Tutunjians they never would have been able to create a Jewish National Home from scratch, the Israel of today.

Indeed, during World War I in Palestine the Jews were a negligible number as compared to the Arabs and were surrounded on all sides by Arab countries. The Arabs made no secret that they would wipe them out if the Jews tried to create a National Home in Palestine through immigration.

As seen, from the standpoint of creating an independent homeland of their own, the Jews were in far more unfavorable circumstances at the end of World War I than the Armenians of today in Soviet Armenia. And yet, the Jews, despite the counsel of their defeatist-minded men like the Tutunjians, did not fear to plunge into the Arabic sea and they succeeded in creating in Palestine a National Home which today boasts a population of nearly two million.

True, all the Arab countries today still threaten to destroy Israel by force of arms and to drive the Jews who are established there into the sea. But Israel is so strong today militarily and economically that the Arab states will have great difficulty to

put an end to the Israeli state of their own powers.

There is no doubt that if the Jews in Palestine had remained under British domination as they were from 1918 to 1948 they never would have been able to create a national home like Israel even though the British Government through Prime Minister Asquith had promised as much. It was only by shedding the British yoke that in 1948 the Jews succeeded in settling in the better part of Palestine and, through mass immigrations, within ten years, they formed a nation of two million. And if the Jews today hope to be able to realize their national ideal, they will be able to do so only because they have an independent state like Israel.

As long as the Armenians do not possess an independent state even within the limits of present Soviet Armenia it would be the height of naiveté for them to dream of a united Armenia. Because no nation is interested in offering them an integrated Armenia. No one will want to break friendly relations with the Turks for the sake of the Armenians. Only an independent Armenia, even if small, can be interested in the integration of her historic boundaries, if not by force of arms, at least through all available peaceful means. A reformed United Nations organization, or some other international body which may take its place, capable of resolving all international differences on the basis of right and justice, may be the instrument which will solve the knotty Armenian question.

This is why all those who, like the Tutunjians, think that by remaining under the Soviet yoke someday they will have a free and independent national home, in reality are striving toward the impossible, and actually they work not only against a free and independent Armenia, but against a united Armenia as well.



# A JOURNEY TO NEW JULFA

COLONEL GEORGE JUSKALIAN

*Infantry, U. S. Army*

If some day you'd like to feel the aura of being in a completely Armenian community, rich in heritage and unique in history, journey to Julfa.

Julfa is in Iran. In reality it is a part of Isfahan, once capital of Persia under the great king Shah Abbas.

The story of the Armenians in Julfa begins from the time of Shah Abbas, for it was he who brought them there at the start of the 17th century. Intent upon developing among his own people the skill in arts and crafts for which the Armenians to the north were famous, Shah Abbas conceived the idea of establishing an Armenian community in his own capital so that the skills of the Armenians might be absorbed by the Persians.

The Armenians did not willingly leave their hearths and villages to settle in Isfahan. They were deeply rooted to their homeland despite the blood baths they suffered time and again at the hands of strong and savage invaders. Holy Etchmiazdin, Erivan, Ararat, Ani — these and the surrounding country were as much a part of their lives as their language and religion.

Notwithstanding, Shah Abbas was not to be denied his dream. He tore the Armenians from their soil.

In those days the Persians were at war with the Turks. Parts of Armenia lay astride the battleground. During the course of the campaign Shah Abbas took tens of

thousands of Armenians into bondage and herded them across the River Arax into Persia. Thousands drowned in the crossing of the Arax; more thousands died during the trek to Isfahan, some 900 miles to the south across long stretches of rough and arid terrain.

It was from the old city of Julfa on the Arax river that many of the captives came. Hence when they were settled in Isfahan the section of the city which Shah Abbas set aside for them became known as Nor Julfa (New Julfa).

(Through the center of Isfahan flows one of Iran's largest rivers, the Zayandehrud. It cuts between Isfahan proper and Nor Julfa, or Julfa as I shall call it henceforth.)

Apparently Shah Abbas had no intention, either forcibly or subtly, of assimilating the Armenians and erasing their identity. On the contrary, his first act of settling them across the river apart from his own people set the stage for the distinctive Armenian community that was to grow and flower for the next 300 years.

I have been told there is a history of the Armenians of Julfa written by an Iranian Armenian which spans the period from the birth of the community to the start of the 20th century. Although I tried to get a copy of this book while stationed in Tehran, I was unsuccessful. Hence my knowledge of Julfa stems from scraps of infor-

mation gleaned here and there from stories, books and conversations and from two trips that I made to Julfa in the summer of 1958.

However, the fact that Julfa did grow and flower needs no historical documentation. It is clearly visible today to even the casual visitor.

The name of Julfa's main thoroughfare starts the visitor off right. It is Avenue Nazar—named after one of the venerable patriarchs. As you stroll along its sycamore-shaded sidewalk you feel in countless ways the enveloping Armenian atmosphere. The voices you hear speak Armenian; the people you pass look Armenian; the lettering on the shop windows is in Armenian; even the kitchen odors drifting into the street teasingly announce that there's Armenian cooking going on inside. Incidentally those odors tugged at me like mighty magnets. I had all I could do to keep my sense of direction and discretion.

Looking for all the world like the conventional American tourist, clothed in typically American garb and armed with the usual camera, I got puckish pleasure out of nodding to passers-by and greeting them with a "parev tsez", or entering the shops and talking to the keepers in Armenian. Of course it surprised and delighted them, for unfortunately few Armenian Americans ever set foot in Julfa.

The most notable and evident vestiges of an earlier era of grandeur are the churches. I was told that at its peak Julfa had more than a score of churches. There are about a dozen remaining of which four or five are active the year around. The others are opened for special occasions such as the name day of the saint for whom the church is named. These are all Armenian Apostolic churches. There is one Armenian Catholic church and monastery in Julfa. I did not find an Armenian Protestant church.

I visited half a dozen of the churches. They are built mostly of sand-colored brick. The most striking architectural feature is the massive dome that crowns the exterior. This may be the influence of the vast Moslem community which surrounds them. However, whereas the domes of the mosques are constructed of breathtakingly beautiful multi-colored or azure mosaics, the domes of the Armenian churches are unpainted. Minor spires of traditional Armenian architectural form rise up around the central dome.

In contrast with the lack of color on the outside, the interiors of the Armenian churches of Julfa are vivid. Murals cover the walls from floor to dome. Not a square foot is bare. The scenes are Biblical in origin.

On the wall of one of the churches is a large panorama depicting heaven and hell. The artist had populated both places about equally, which indicated to me at first glance that the artist hadn't played favorites. As I looked closer, however, I noticed a most whimsical feature. Without exception the artist had consigned all the menfolk to heaven and all the womenfolk to hell! Pity the devil.

Focal point of religious activity is the Apostolic Cathedral with its adjoining "vank" (monastery) and "thangaran" (museum). It is the most impressive of all the churches. The grounds are inclosed within a high wall, which is characteristic of most properties in Iran.

The "drnapan" (doorkeeper) is a sight unto himself. Without fear of contradiction I will vouch that he wears the largest nose in all Christendom—big as a 100 watt bulb and shaped about the same! I thought of Cyrano de Bergerac and the book that had been written about him. The drnapan's nose was equally worthy of such distinction. I engaged him in conversation

and got the impression that his heart was fully as big as his nose.

The first time I visited the Cathedral was on a Sunday so I attended the services. There was only a handful of worshippers. I was disappointed. This small percentage of worshippers was something that puzzled me throughout my stay in Iran. At no time—save Easter and Christmas—was there a sizable congregation in any of the Apostolic churches I attended either in Tehran or in Julfa. It appeared to be far lower percentage-wise than in the Armenian churches in the United States.

I speculated as to the causes underlying this condition and decided that at least one of them was the fact that Friday is the sabbath day in predominantly Moslem Iran and that Sunday is just another day of the week in which the Christian churches must compete with business enterprises for attention. But that did not seem to be the complete answer.

I concluded that the Armenian churches in the United States were more dynamic by far—this despite the seemingly conflicting fact that the average Armenian American's knowledge of the Armenian language is well below that of his compatriots in Iran or elsewhere in the Middle East.

Almost without exception the priests were old men. I would guess that the average age of the priests would be in the neighborhood of 65. Quite a difference from the far more youthful group in the Armenian churches in the United States. Here too, I think, is a reason for the greater apparent vigor of the Church in America.

Next door to the Cathedral is the "thangaran". As you enter, the caretaker asks you to sign the guest book. Scanning backward over the pages you note the names of people from all corners of the world. They have not come in great throngs, for Julfa and Isfahan are relatively remote

places. But over the decades the few this year and the few yesteryear mount up to a sizable host.

I am no authority on manuscripts, plain or illuminated, nor on old printed books, but I was fascinated by the fine workmanship which I saw there on display. I marveled at the patience and craftsmanship of the writer or copier who centuries ago must have spent months and even years in the preparation of a single volume.

Of particular interest was a font of type in excellent condition dating back to the early 17th century. This told me that the Armenians in Julfa were engaged in printing not too long after the art of printing with movable type had been invented in Germany by Gutenberg in about 1450. Considering the slowness with which new methods of doing things were passed on or adopted in those days, particularly in a land where scenes reminiscent of Biblical times are by no means a rarity even today, it is noteworthy that the art of printing somehow got to Julfa as soon as it did. It speaks well for the forward thinking of our forefathers in a faraway place and in a faraway era.

I had lunch that day at Levon's. This was by special arrangement because he did not ordinarily serve lunch. Levon was open normally only for the evening meal. But even this was only a sideline with him. His chief occupation was winegrower.

As a result of my experience at Levon's I am convinced that the way to find yourself a good meal is to scout around for a winegrower who has a fondness for cooking. It's a savory combination.

The lamb was succulent—made even more so by the accompanying wine. At first I had trouble locating the kebab. It seems that in order to keep it hot until it is ready to be eaten, the cook tucks it under a layer of "tanhats" or "lavash" as they call it over there. So you fish out the de-

lectable chunks and feast to your stomach's content. Even the "tan hats", with the juices of the meat soaked into it, becomes a gourmet's delight.

While at Levon's I learned that the Armenians of Julfa are a clannish lot. Levon had a couple of men from an outlying Armenian village—there are several near Julfa—working for him. In the course of the conversation it developed that no matter how long an outsider lives in Julfa he is always considered a "toorsetsi."

One outsider, so the story goes, was so frustrated by this custom after having married a "Julfatsi" and lived in Julfa for over 20 years that when his last child was born he was heard to complain: "How is it my child can become a "Julfatsi" in nine months while after 20 years his father still remains a "doorsetsi?"

After lunch practically all activity in Iran comes to a halt. Julfa is no exception. The streets are deserted; the shops are shut. The best advice for a stranger in Iran at a time like this is to do as the Iranians do—find a couch somewhere and curl up for a couple of hours. If he doesn't he's one against 20,000,000. With that advice in mind I located an easy chair in the home of a recently made friend and passed the next two hours in siesta. As I dozed away I rationalized my inactivity by recalling the words from Noel Coward's catchy song: "Mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the midday sun." After all, I was neither!

My next stop was the Armenian hospital. If I recall correctly it was named the Poghosian Hospital after the original benefactor. Julfa is studded with the names of ancient benefactors. Most of the churches, it seems, were built by such men. Names of two that come to mind are Hoja Avetik and Hoja Petros.

The hospital had room for about 25 patients. There was one doctor on the staff, a pharmacist, four or five male at-

tendants and half a dozen sa-called nurses. I say "so-called" because they had had no formal training elsewhere. Under over-all supervision of the doctor the younger girls were simply picking up the rudiments from their more experienced sisters. The equipment was primitive. The doctor had received his medical training in Turkey and had come to Iran and eventually to Julfa some years before.

I was depressed as I left the hospital. Perhaps I shouldn't have been. After all, it was far better than nothing. But I couldn't help hoping that somehow through the grace of God and a modern benefactor it might be made more adequate to take care of the people of Julfa.

Julfa has two orphanages: one for boys and one for girls. I had bad luck at the boys' orphanage. Only a couple were there when I went; the others were off on a picnic. I looked around the building and the furnishings. It was austere by American standards but a lot better than other sights I had seen in Iran. I'm sure none of the lads went hungry or suffered from the cold although they enjoyed scarcely any of the little luxuries taken so much for granted by our youngsters in the United States.

I had better luck at the girls' orphanage. They were at home, all nine of them. But it took a heap of coaxing to get them out from their hiding places to visit with the "Amerikatsi". It was only after they had been convinced by the House Mother, "Oriod Mariam", that I was a "Hye-Amerikatsi" that they timidly edged out of their nooks and crannies. They soon dropped their shyness, however, and before long I found myself in the middle of a songfest which eventually turned into a chatterfest.

Someone would say something and they would all get the giggles. Then I'd say something in my Kharpertsi-brand Armenian which only served to keep the kettle boiling. It wasn't what I said, I'm sure, as

much as how I said it that turned their giggles into convulsions.

It goes without saying that an orphan's lot at best is pinched by sadness. But there was no sadness those few hours that day. We had fun! Yes, I too had fun. It was catching. There were many tears; the kind of tears one longs to see in such surroundings; tears of laughter.

Looking back on it now I wonder what was really so funny. Nothing perhaps. I suppose it just happened to be the right time, the right place, the right folk and a swarm of tickle bugs in the air.

Where are those girls now? Still there no doubt. Most of them anyway. For it was not too long ago—less than two years—that I was in Julfa. They ranged in ages from eight to thirteen.

Where will they be ten years hence? Will they be there in Julfa still? Some yes; some no. Some may go to Abadan; some to Tehran; others may leave Iran, and others may even come to America.

And what will they be doing? Well, that's not nearly as hard to answer. Pretty as they were, they'll all be wed!

The episodes I have recounted were

among the more interesting ones I experienced in Julfa. There were others, too, like the silversmiths in their dingy stalls fashioning exquisitely dainty jewelry, like the Armenian Club where they were dancing the cha-cha-cha like mad while this modern Westerner (yours truly) stumbled through the old two-step! Baffling and intriguing are the contrasts.

But lest I leave you with a false picture, let me close by saying that Julfa today is only a remnant of the Julfa of 50 years ago. Then and earlier as an integral part of Isfahan it was an important link in the overland trade route that ran through the Middle East. It is no longer.

Changing times have changed Julfa. Gone is most of its affluence. Gone too are most of its people—in all directions: east to India and the Far East, north to the capital city of Tehran and still farther north to Soviet Armenia, south to the oil centers of Abadan and Kuwait, and west to Europe and the Western Hemisphere beyond.

But enough said. There is still much there. Journey to Julfa and see for yourself.

## *Prayer*

VAHAN YERVANTIAN

*In front of thine immensity  
I bow,  
My Lord,  
And falling down on my knees,  
I pray  
Today  
A new religion and faith will dawn  
In me,  
With thee  
As center of that golden shrine  
I'll be  
Happy,  
And with the help of heavenly wine,  
My days  
I'll face,  
With faith and courage,  
Given by thee  
To humble me;  
Yes, O great Lord  
From thy greatness  
A part to give to me.  
I pray  
And then today  
Today, today  
Today will be,  
The funeral  
Of the past Me.*



## *Signor Roturni's Soliloquy*

(Anno Domini 1800)

V. DURGARIAN

*I read Divina Commedia,  
studied painting in Milano,  
bewildered many masters  
with my stray talents,  
said I to Signor Affuzio;  
young, handsome, dark, dashing  
pupil of Music, toiled on cembalo,  
arduous counterpoint, and played Scarlatti  
like fire blazing.*

*Ah! What consuming exuberance. Bravo!  
I briskly clapped*

*as he commenced a tonic<sup>1</sup> and played  
graceful Minuet.*

*Boisterously he displays joy,  
capriciously he plays, like satyr drunk with  
wild song.*

*Strife for design? Pleasure in the act wholly?  
I paint for purpose—a design severe,  
But Affuzio stirs with rapture  
Whence, I know not.*

*Joy rewards no seeker, eludes me.*

*It's proper in man to grow like coherent tree  
with foliage abundant, not leafless,  
perhaps, without purpose.*

*But in this there is consolation:*

*Faithfully to seek by venture and thought  
regions where dwell new order of things;  
And who is more worthy  
as faithful, lasting bride  
through life's strange journey  
than Beauty<sup>2</sup> by my side?*

*Faultless technique, dexterous hand,  
Of what avail, other than rational end?*

*Oh! Those fine statuaries of Robbia's  
lunettes,  
calm sadness of Botticelli's frescoes,  
towers still in Florence that silent, mighty  
dome*

*conceived by one astonishing human engine,  
puny, inexhaustible Brunelleschi.*

*Pains my heart forlorn*

*with awe smote,  
as waning eye glimpses,  
within this twilight vault,  
frets and forms wrought  
by patient hands tireless.*

*Oh great spirits!*

*Your homages to God?*

*They said at the Academy  
the springs to decoration  
arise from rich imagination.*

*Then Art is dead.*

*Here preserved, in basilicas, palaces,  
museums, are spirits.*

*Spirit creates decoration,  
not by hand, nor mind, but heart.*

*To Affuzio, like Terpender plucking  
melodies*

*in eulogy on the strings,  
said I, "hand and mind are co-servants of  
heart."*

*Reason without spirit, as eyes without sight,  
is the blind man shut from breathtaking  
light.*

<sup>1</sup> The initial harmony of musical composition.

<sup>2</sup> In the abstract, Platonic sense.

## A WONDERFUL WORLD COLLAPSES

PUZAND GRANIAN

There was the time when my faith was indestructible. The world was full of gods and phantoms. I was still a lad, scarcely having spanned the period of youth. I was conscious of my powers and I had a supreme respect and admiration for man the creature and his mission.

With the passing of the years the idols were toppled, others survived. Those who were left were the living gods endowed with human frailties. They remained thus even after their death. The earth turned to earth. The spirit remained indestructible.

Such a god was Aghbalian, my teacher, such gods were Hamo and Rouben, my teachers in the school of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation.

For years I wanted to write about them, to write in such a manner that their portraits and spirits would bounce through my words and my lines would survive the ravages of time.

There was the time when I, a mere lad, sat with them under one roof, sat with them, and enjoyed the luxury of their intimacy.

It was a patriarchal, legendary world which suddenly collapsed.

In 1929 we came to Cairo from Zakazik to attend an anniversary celebration of May 28, day of Armenia's independence. The affair was to be presided over by Dr. Hamo Ohandjanian, former Prime Minis-

ter of Armenia. We considered this a rare privilege, a blissful piece of good fortune. They were names which we had heard with passionate enchantment, which we had turned into idols, without having seen them. We had carved their images in our imagination.

Hamo was a magnificent man. When he ascended the podium with his tall figure, his handsome face and frame, we were literally dazzled. It was Hamo Ohandjanian himself, in the flesh, right before our eyes. When he started to speak I had a slight disappointment. For his imposing figure, his voice was too mild, delicate to the point of being feminine. It was an impression which, however, soon disappeared.

One month later, in the night, I had come to Cairo from Zakazikeh for the farewells. I was leaving for America, to study there. My brother introduced me to Hamo and to Vahan Navassardian.

"Come over, let me see your face," Hamo said, "Nicol (Aghbalian) has told me so many good things about you. You have been his dearest pupil in the Boghosian School."

"What a pity," commented Vahan, "what a pity that you are sending him to America. What is he going to do there?"

Upon my return from America I settled in Cairo. My brother's home was not far from the Ohandjanian home. We had fam-



ily relations with each other. My brother's sons affectionately called Ohandjanian "Grandfather". They often came to dinner with us and we reciprocated. As a rule Rouben and Mrs. Anna would be there. Rouben was the godfather of my brother's two daughters. On Sundays we held parties at the home of the Chrakians.

Hamo was a magnificent man, a true patriarch, the custodian of the Armenian world. He was considered tall, although I think it was the sublimity of his soul which made him look taller. Behind a thoughtful forehead God had carved a pair of beautiful, gently sad, deep and infinitely noble eyes, through which his soul peered into yours. They were extraordinarily beautiful eyes, a beauty which shone in its external lines, as well as in the force of their expression. His forehead, his greying hair, his sharp pointed beard and the shining brightness of his face, his entire countenance were expressive of authenticity, sublimity, nobility and a strange purity of the soul.

Hamo did not live in this world, his feet scarcely touched the earth. Behind his magnificent exterior there beat an equally magnificent heart. He was sensitive, an all-embracing goodness. It was impossible to imagine that Hamo could have offended anyone. He dominated without dictating, without wishing to dominate. Even his anger, a rare occurrence, had nothing personal in it, much like the severity of natural elements. He was an indisputable moral authority. The only one. This feeling generated from his personality, his entire being. He was born to be great, to lead, to inspire. Glory must have been a stranger to him.

He was a thoroughbred in exterior and his mode of living, and at the same time he was the most popular person that I had ever seen. In this sense, only Aghbalian and Rouben could have compared with

him. Hamo had a profound respect for the human being. He respected them all. When you told him that a certain Unger (comrade) had lied, he would chide instantly, "An Unger never lies."

And he literally believed what he said.

During the Second World War political debates were held at the editorial offices of Housaper. Hamo would say,

"Churchill does not lie."

He had high esteem and faith in man, invariably seeing the good in every man and in every thing.

He was extremely modest, a modesty which was at once spontaneous and natural, not the kind of simulated intentional modesty which relies on the urge to rule and to be glorified.

He celebrated his birthday each year, a day which we awaited with eager anticipation. On that day we went to knock on his door. When we sat at his table and felt thirsty, he himself filled our glasses. He was a patriarch in his home where he both ruled and served. When the guests arrived—no invitations were sent—we used to sit around the table which was already set by Mrs. Rubina and his sister Miss Elia. For this solemn occasion, Hamo himself prepared the Vodka. He and Rubina sat at the head of the table, flanked on each side by Rouben, Anna, Libarit, the Chrakians, Kourken Mekhitarian, my brother Gevorg and Barouhi, Sebouh, Koko, Jirair and others.

Then they started the singing, the speeches and the toasts. We drank to the longevity of Hamo and Rubina, the force of our good wishes, our admiration and inspiration being directed especially to his person.

God created man from the earth and breathed in him his breath. He created man according to His image. Man is the earthen vessel in which the Word, God himself came to live. When that external

vessel is unworthy of carrying God's breath, it were better to shatter it and trample under foot.

And if there was one being who was worthy of carrying God's image on his exterior, and His breath in his soul, that person was Hamo Ohandjanian.

One day, in a lecture staged by the *Hamazgayin Cultural Organization*, dedicated to the memory of Khrimian Hairig, the beloved Catholicos of All Armenians, he drew on his old memories and told us how Hairig, when he arrived at Akhalkalak, stopped at the home of Ohandjanians.

"We menfolk went to meet Hairig," he said. "Hairig", of course, means "Little Father" in the Armenian language. The Armenians always referred to their supreme spiritual head with the affectionate title of "Little Father".

"His majesty," he continued, "surrounded by his retinue and seated on his magnificent horse, approached our home. At the door of our large patriarchal home, my grandmother, surrounded by some seventy children and grandchildren, with her daughters and sons-in-law, met the Little Father. Hairig dismounted his horse and turning to Ohandjanian's grandmother, who had hastened to kneel down and embrace the skirts of his vestments, asked her in wonderment:

"Little Mother, how do you govern such a large family?"

"By loving them all alike, Little Father," she replied.

Hamo Ohandjanian was the true grandchild of his grandmother. He was love incarnate, even toward his antagonists. All respected him without exception, whether they were Dashnaks or opponents. It could not be said that Unger Hamo loved one more than the other. He was the same to all, much like his grand old grandmother.

He listened to all their complaints, their grievances. When he became convinced

that one was wronged, he defended him. And when we expressed our displeasure, he would say to us:

"Have a forgiving spirit. Keep working. Work makes one forget everything. You think I have no pains, no worries, no grievances. All these are hidden inside me. I work and I forget. Keep working. You are young."

In social circles, in meetings, he would stand up and defend the principles of Dashnaktutyoun, the democratic spirit of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation. His word was an oracle, short, clean cut and forceful, with the impact of sincerity and impartiality.

Once, in a public meeting, he stood up like a champion and declared: "Here is the supreme assembly of our organization in Cairo. The comrades have a right to express their views and to ask questions on all Dashnak issues."

His presence was enough to calm down the aroused passions and to fill the air with the aroma of idealism. It seemed he was the rear guard of the first Dashnak generation, our Patriarch and Master.

Despite his advanced age, he was the idol of the youth. He never grew old in spirit. "Old age is way of feeling," he would say, "I do not feel that I have grown old."

He was an optimist, a firm believer in the Armenian Cause. No one, nothing could shake that faith. He had seen the good and the evil, he had seen and lived the Armenian suffering, had acclaimed the triumph of the Armenian people through the declaration of the Free and Independent Armenian Republic, and had been its Prime Minister.

During the famous Petersburg trials where the Armenian Revolutionary Federation was the defendant, Hamo Ohandjanian, one of the principal accused, stood before the Tsarist Judge, courageously defended the ideals and the policies of the

Armenian Revolutionary Federation, defended Armenia's cause of freedom, and fearlessly declared to that august body that, if freed, he again would pursue the same objectives.

He had been sentenced to a term of hard labor in Siberian exile, where his body had been shattered but his spirit was unbroken. During the ordeal of his Siberian exile, his wife Rubina, like a guardian angel, had taken care of him.

When, having been pardoned, he had returned to the Caucasus, completely exhausted and broken in body, he again had hurled himself into the struggle of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation.

During the fights of May, 1918, when the Armenian people were fighting for their very life, he had sent his only son to the battlefield at Karakilisseh. His son never returned, he died a hero like his companions-in-arms on the battle field.

After the fall of the Independent Republic he had been imprisoned in a Yerevan jail, waiting for his execution when the February uprising had liberated the political prisoners, and Hamo, like Moses of old, had again headed the expatriated Dashnaktzutyoun.

He was the indisputable moral and ideological leader of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation until the hour of his death.

Our party has no dictator. We have elected bodies. The individual is subordinated to the body. People become leaders in our organization by their self-effacement, their moral integrity, and their personal talents, provided these talents are placed at the disposal of the common ideal—the well being of the Armenian people.

In this sense, Hamo Ohandjanian was a leader.

Now, years later that I write these lines in a distant land, now that he no longer lives, I see in my imagination his noble

countenance, dominated by twin eyes which are filled with a blend of sadness, goodness and the resplendence of his spirit.

His is the crystalized spirit now, in our thoughts, our imagination and our beings. Aghbalian, Hamo and Rouben, after my mother, my teachers all. Who says they are dead? That they no longer live? If they were dead, I would not feel the way I do now, I would not be writing about them. How can they be dead when they often are in my thoughts, my words, my feelings, the very cadence and the vibrations of my being. Where do I begin, and where do they end? At times they are so real I cannot even doubt their presence.

Where are the borders of the reality, of the material and transcendental worlds? It seems they are right who believe in, who pierce the walls of space and time. Nothing in the universe is lost. In the universe, entities move from one state to another, from one sphere to another. Life itself is a running current, a transitory state, as if the boundaries were not unconditional, impassable.

I knock on the door and the colored boy Abdou opens it to me.

"El—Doctoer fil beit?" I ask him.

"Naam," answers the Negro doorman.

Hamo appears at the door of the sanatorium.

"Puzand, is it you? Come in, come in."

I take a seat, Hamo sits opposite me, his benevolent look resting on me.

"How have you been?"

"I am not well, Doctor. I am a nervous wreck, I can't sleep, and black thoughts harass me. I think I am sick. Although I know, I reason that I am not sick, and yet, the fixation does not leave me."

"Don't worry, it will pass. Things will be better, everything will be better."

He would rummage his medicine chest, would select the exact potion, and would explain to me how to use it.

"Come see me in the mornings, I will give you another needle," he would say.

Then he would sit with me and would talk about *Dashnaktzutyoun*. He would not take any money, either for the call or the medicine.

He was a respected and universally beloved physician. He called on all patients, whenever the distress sounded. He would ascend several flights, would examine the patient, would give a prescription, but never took any money, and at times, when he saw that his patient was needy, he would secretly slip some money under his pillow and then would leave. Blessings and prayers followed in his wake.

He was a first class physician. His diagnosis was almost always infallible. They used to say that, in Tiflis, he had attained a high post and could have bettered it if he wanted. The doctorate was a means of serving mankind and he fulfilled his mission conscientiously. And yet his attention, his entire being was absorbed in another thing. He pursued one supreme ideal—the liberation of the Armenian people. This was above his personal welfare, position, family and even life itself. He was ready to sacrifice his life for the sake of the fatherland any time, when the occasion demanded it.

We were assembled in his home, around he table. It was the anniversary of his birthday. That day I was the toastmaster.

"I shall live to be one hundred. I shall see the independence of Armenia where I shall celebrate my hundredth birthday. I never admit that I am getting old. As long as Rubina is with me (he pressed her to his side) I shall yet live long years."

Toward Rubina he was like a lover. Total affection and tenderness. They used to come to the Navassard Club, arm in arm. They sat side by side in the meetings.

That year he was in high spirits, more than ever before. He would fill our glasses

with the Vodka and would boast proudly: "This is my handiwork."

"Unger Hamo," I addressed myself to him, "if there's one man toward whom we the young people hold supreme admiration and respect, that man is you."

He listened to me, ensconced deeply like a patriarch in his armchair.

"We admire you, we have made you our ideal leader, because you are one of those rare few who demonstrate the validity of the ideas they preach with their very lives."

Accepting the sincerity of what he heard, and in all simplicity, Hamo replied: "Everyone of you can become an individual Hamo. There's nothing exceptional in me."

Every man could not become a Hamo, and yet there was the germ of a truth in what he said. Hamo was not an orator, not an exceptional political thinker, not a writer of distinction. He had no particular talent. He was a balanced personality, well-read, and endowed with an unusual idealism. He was a spiritual celebrity, a powerful moral personality. He was a leader. Whenever he made his entry in a company he brightened the atmosphere and inspired respect. He had an air about him, just like the inimitable Aghbalian.

Ohandjanian's first god was the Armenian Revolutionary Federation; the second, the Hamazgayin Cultural Union whose life President, as well as one of the founders he was.

Nishan Palandjian was dead in his early youth and we had buried him in Cairo. His sisters, in conformity with the wishes of their dead brother, had donated 20,000 Egyptian Pounds to Hamazgayin's *Djemaran* (Junior College) of Beirut.

The news of the gift broke like a bomb, releasing general excitement. Hamo was happiest of all. His dream had come true; the Djemaran now was made self-supporting. A dinner was staged in honor of the

two Palandjian sisters in the Navassard Club in which Hamo presided. The two sisters came in their mourning attire. At this party Hamo revealed that he soon would leave for Beirut in connection with the execution of the will.

Before leaving Egypt, if I am not mistaken, Hamo was to be vaccinated for yellow fever. The second day of the vaccination, in the evening, he fell ill and was moved to the German Hospital. He was convinced that the municipal doctor had exceeded the dose.

Hamo was seriously ill. We all were distressed over it. There was the shadow of deep worry on all foreheads. Party members and the young people kept vigil in the hospital until morning. His condition steadily deteriorated and all efforts to save his life proved vain. One week later he expired.

Hamo no longer was with us. Housaper, the Cairo Armenian newspaper printed his picture on the first page, encircled in black. It was a good face, distinguished, and infinitely pure.

The wires flashed the sad news everywhere. Amid a throng of thousands of mourners, hitherto unseen, we carried Hamo on our shoulders to the cemetery.

There was a handful of earth from the soil of Armenia in the Armenian Tricolor which enwrapped his body.

A whole world collapsed, never to return again. A noble soul departed from this world.

The Patriarch Hamo, the eternal goodness and sadness in his eyes, ascended to heaven. He was met there by the immortals of the Armenian National Revolution, Christopher, Rostom and Simon.

## A Tune from the Melodies of Life

LAURA BARDAKIAN

Suddenly, I must away and run,  
I turn around, the crowd is gone;  
Time with its copper key locks the gates  
of Day,  
and I in the sombre room am left to stay  
as the gates shut, as senses lax and sway.

For far away that friendly tune trills  
and one by one ascends the scale of note,  
higher and higher the music flies  
then drops, then mourns, then begs of the  
heart,  
then begs of the lonely heart.

But still the melody plays with the senses  
and that same music begs of the soul  
as notes pull the strings of the unguarded  
heart—

"give in", first pounds and on it pounds  
until it blasts—

I hear no words no voice from above  
but ask my Maker with stronger might  
and wonder if such a time as this to beg

is right;  
while quiet all the years before  
when the melody was so remote

that never smote  
I stood too far and high.

If you just have by better luck  
found the secret cure of the soul,  
or if you have by real success  
succumbed the summit of your desires,  
tell me, is it too late to beg  
or wrong to ask for things you love to get?

But all is still.  
I hear that melody again  
more clearly rising to melancholy  
for all is still.

It steps over the eart and rises high.  
Is it the weight of the rising tune?  
Is it the fading, grimacing Sun?  
Is it the dirge of the dying wind?  
Is it the whisper of the naked trees  
that push that squeeze that crush the soul  
that twist the chords of the untied heart  
and rub the sick veins until benumbed?

And yet that mellow anthem is strange  
to such unwanted heart.  
Don't you wonder why?



# TURKEY AND THE WORLD

JAMES G. MANDALIAN

*TURKEY AND THE WORLD, by Altemur Kilic, Public Affairs Press, Washington, D.C. 1959.*

In the early Twenties, soon after Mustafa Kemal's armies had driven the Greek army into the sea, a public meeting was held at the Tremont Temple of Boston, obviously under auspices of the church authorities, for the purpose of listening to a lecture on the "modernized Turkey". The speaker of the evening was Halide Edib Hanum, a Turkish woman of distinction as writer, educator and propaganda agent of Mustafa Kemal the Atatürk.

The church hall was filled to capacity, with a generous representation from Armenians who mostly occupied the seats in the balcony. This, to our knowledge, was the first Turkish woman who had come to speak to an American audience, curiosity and interest were at a high pitch, and according to all appearances, the sympathy of the overwhelming majority of the American audience was with the speaker. That hitherto a backward and universally discredited people were making a genuine effort to shed off the shackles of the old regime and to revamp their shattered reputation into some form of social respectability like all civilized nations of the world played no small part in this overwhelming sympathy which has placed the American sense of fair play always on the side which

we colloquially call the underdog.

Only a few years before there had been a sweeping tide of emotional surcharge in behalf of the Armenians who had just been liberated from the tyranny of this very Turk. American hearts had gone out for those "poor, massacred, starving Armenians". Countless articles had been written, and equally countless speeches had been delivered depicting the unutterable sufferings of the Armenians at the hands of the murderous Turks. Relief societies had been organized and millions had been raised to ameliorate these sufferings. The question of an American Mandate over Armenia had been debated in the American Congress and President Wilson, the champion of small oppressed peoples, had defined the new boundaries of the Independent Republic of Armenia. The Armenian prestige was riding on the crest of the waves in those days.

But now, gone were those days and the Armenians had been forgotten. A new star had arisen on the horizon and the star of the Armenians was extinguished.

Halide Hanum was as brilliant a speaker as she was charming in personality. She spoke with hardly an accent. She made a tremendous hit with her American audience.

She recounted the feats of the great Atatürk, the patriot, soldier and statesman

of the newly-awakened nation. She spoke of the great and cataclysmic changes which were going on in Turkey, the great intellectual and cultural awakening, the discarding of the old and outmoded institutional vestments, the removal of the womens' veil, symbol of their emancipation, the elimination of the Harems, the displacing of the old, sinister-looking red Fez with the European hat, the replacing of the old Arabic script with the Latin script, the abolition of the Sultanate, the *Sheriat*, the rule of the reactionary clergy, and the establishment of democratic orders. In short, the modernization of Turkey.

And the audience was ecstatic.

When she was through with the lecture, opportunity was given for questions from the floor, and, availing myself of the opportunity, I put in my question.

"Halide Hanum," I said, "now that you say Turkey has become modernized, tell us what the Turkish Government proposes to do with the Armenian Question. What about the murder of one million Armenians? What about the historic Armenian territories? Does the Turkish Government intend to right the wrong which the Turks did to the Armenians?"

Halide Hanum turned pale from anger, the charming smile which hitherto had enchanted her audience vanished from her face, and she verily hissed the words at me:

"The Turks took those territories by the might of their sword, and if the Armenians want them back, they shall have to do it the same way."

This was the celebrated "*Kilijimin Hakki Ile*"—By the might of my sword—the age-old Turkish philosophy of Might makes right. This was the answer of an only recently "civilized" Turk to a civilized question.

I have related this incident in order to

show that, for an adequate understanding of anything which a Turk writes about himself or about others, this fundamental Turkish assumption of *Kilijimin Hakki Ile* is a requisite. Without this basic assumption, what follows is meaningless, with it, the Turkish argument becomes logical. This is true also of Altemur Kilic's opus under consideration.

At the very outset, Altemur Kilic makes provision for the element of bias. "I want to admit at the beginning that complete objectivity is not, and cannot be, a marked characteristic of this book. As a Turk writing on matters directly related to Turkey, I could not possibly have a detached approach."

And yet, given a few basic assumptions, a few understatements, particularly in the instance of minority groups, a few permissible attenuations or exaggerations in the interests of the nation which he defends, and as related to those nations which he censures, a careful perusal of the work reveals that Altemur Kilic has treated his subject with remarkable objectivity, far better than many exponents of national causes who have pleaded their case. Incredible as it may seem, he impresses us as a breath of fresh clean air in a suffocating atmosphere, the first Turk who, remarkable as it may seem, is capable of speaking in terms of the western mind. Even an Armenian would be tempted to think that, here at last is a Turk with whom an Armenian could talk on a rational basis.

The magnitude and the value of the service which he has rendered his people is perhaps greater than even the capacity of his own people to comprehend, because his has been a difficult and arduous task. He has been trying desperately to dissipate the reputation of ignobility which has shrouded his nation these long centuries and to restore her to international respectability, and we might truthfully say, he



has succeeded in this task with remarkable dexterity. To the reader who is not perfectly familiar with the other side, he is almost convincing and few is not the number of his readers who will be won to the Turkish cause.

His defense of his people, all the way from Muhammed the Conqueror to the present East-West conflict is magnificent from the Turkish viewpoint, and even in his moments of bitterness (witness his constant reference to the "misunderstood Turk", the Turkish concept of the "liberal Ottoman State", the blatant European boastings of "destroying the Sick Man", the European intrigues and the abuses of the Capitulations, the thousand-fold perfidious and pernicious pressures and blackmailing practices which have been inflicted on his people), one involuntarily senses that the hands of the persecutors of his nation have not been entirely untainted.

Altamur Kilic would be quite all right if he extended some of this bitterness and human understanding toward those peoples who obviously have their share of the grievances against his own people. And if some of the many defects of his interpretation, visible only to the keen eye of those who have suffered under Turkish tyranny, especially the Armenians, are pointed out in this discussion, it should be clear to him that there is no intention here to advance the negative notion that, to an Armenian, everything that a Turk says is necessarily worthless, but these observations are advanced in the interests of a better understanding between two peoples who experience of the past has been deplorable. These observations are made in the firm belief that here we are dealing at last with a man of understanding, a man who comprehends the western mind.

A graphic and accurate recital (leaving aside the interpretations) of the incidents

and the events of the past fifty odd years affecting the life of the Turkish people, this work of Altamur Kilic may be considered an attempt to rehabilitate the Turkish people into civilized society, or, precisely speaking, to make them accepted by civilized society.

In this sense, the work may be divided into three major categories: The misunderstood Turk; An Apology for Turkish Neutrality in World War II; and Turkey with the West. The first of these major premises is highly vulnerable, the second is highly competent, cogent, yet somewhat perforated with weak spots, the third, the most successfully defensible.

### The Misunderstood Turk

In the effort to rehabilitate a discredited personality, society or a people, the "misunderstood" angle is, of course, the most successful approach. Once the "misunderstanding" is established, half of the battle is won, and Altamur Kilic plays this line to the hilt.

"In going through many volumes by different authors," he writes, "I have come to the conclusion that Turkey and the Turks have been, to say the least, misunderstood." All the Turkish excesses have been the result of the West's refusal to accept the Turk's well-intentioned advances as a civilized personality.

He even goes as far back as the time of Fatih Sultan Mehmet and Suleyman the Magnificent who made overtures of friendship with Emperor Charles and King Francis and who were rejected.

Professor Albert Bushnell Hart of Harvard University, speaking of the Turk's acceptance by Europe, once wrote:

"What do the Turks bring with them to show that they are suited for world citizenship? What have they contributed to the civilization of the world? The Arabs have been great scientists; we have had Arabic

literature and Moorish architecture. What have the Turks ever produced in literature or in art? What great buildings have ever been constructed by Turkish architects? What great poems have the Turks ever written to illustrate the history of human thought? What have they done in science and medicine?

"After six centuries of empire the Turks must confess failure. They have satisfied no race except Turks. The non-Turkish subjects are against them. They have always been against them, and for the best of reasons—because of the atrocious character of the Turkish government.

"They claim to come into the fellowship of Christian nations because they have exterminated a race (The Armenians) far superior to themselves in culture, in religion, in history, and in all that goes to make up a nation; and thus have put an end to those outcries about the massacres. Everybody has now been massacred who was in the way of the Turk."

A point is made of the geography of Turkey, the land which he conquered and squatted on from peoples who were infinitely superior to him in culture, as the focal point which unites the East and the West, as proof of Turkish ideological affinity with the West.

"Especially for the Turkish intellectual, 'to be with the West' is a matter of basic philosophy and it transcends strategic and economic mutual interests."

A case might be made, and quite successfully, of this philosophical affinity with the West in the instance of the Armenians. The historic Armenians, although situated on the same land which the Turks now hold, had much in common with the West, ethnically, temperamentally and ideologically. In the first place, they were Aryans like the peoples of the West. They were the first people to accept the religion of Christianity which later became the religion of

the West. Through their contacts with the Greeks and the Byzantines, they had absorbed much of the Hellenic culture. They were an industrious, progressive and creative people like the peoples of the West. Situated between East and West, they were essentially a Western people. They had valid cause to resent if the West rejected them.

But who were the Turks who today claim to have been misunderstood? Who are grieved that the West has rejected them? What claim do the Turks have for philosophical and ideological affinity with the West?

No nation of history blighted the lives of so many peoples as the Turk. No predatory tribe which ever stalked out of its lair corrupted, degraded, debased, deflowered, defiled, befouled, contaminated and polluted the lives of as many millions as did the Ottoman Turk.

Gladstone called him "the scourge of civilization". Of him it was written: "Where the Turk's horse's hooves trod, the grass never grew again." He has been called "The Gray Wolf of the East". A representative of Greece once said to Masterman in London: "Turkey is not an empire; it is a disease."

The Turk has been noted in history for his savagery, pitilessness and utter lack of mercy. He gave no quarter to the weak, the women and children included. For centuries his name was associated with the dreadful *Yataghan*, the chilling instrument of massacre, rape and pillage.

Masterman resented his re-entry into Europe, felt happy when he was almost ejected from that region during the Balkan wars, and resented even more his re-entry after the Treaty of Lausanne. The peoples of the Middle East resented his entry into Asia Minor. All the peoples of the Byzantine Empire who were conquered by him cursed him during their captivity and they

carried the residue of their hatred with them after their liberation.

Have all the historians of the world gone wrong and only the Turk is right? Who has misunderstood the Turk, the rest of the world, or the Turk himself?

During the first world war, when the Russian armies were advancing on Bitlis, an Armenian company of horsemen who had joined the advance guard of 300 Cossacks, came across an Armenian village called Gieuzel Dereh which had been completely wiped out by the Turks. This is what an eye witness later wrote about the gruesome picture:

"Before their massacre in the village and the church, the Turks had selected and carried away all the beautiful young girls and brides and had satiated their lust on their terrorized, helpless victims. In the center of the saturnalian orgies, piled on one another, were the naked bodies of the women, mangled and interlocked in hideous embrace, all done to death with cold weapons. Around their corpses, like a ring, were rows of sharp stakes firmly planted in the ground, each bearing the body of a young woman or a girl who had been impaled. The bellies of some of them were ripped lengthwise with a sharp sword, entrails hanging out. The wombs of pregnant women were ripped open, their luxuriant long hair strewn over their naked bodies, or clinging to their bodies with clotted blood.

"As to the expression on their faces, it was a picture of infinite, unutterable suffering and anguish, as if in writhing, which had been frozen. Not even the brush of the most skillful artist could paint the scene in its stark reality. Tightly squeezed teeth, half-closed slanting eyes, gaping mouths, grotesquely repulsive, and bulging closed eyes. It was as if they were ready to cry out, to shriek, but how can I tell it?"

The men who did this thing were the

soldiers of a retreating Turkish army, the brave and valiant fighters of Justice William O. Douglas of the United States Supreme Court, the man who once apologized for having spoken at a meeting of Armenian freedom fighters because some Armenian Pinks had persuaded him that he had been "taken in by Dashnak Fascists!"

The question is, can the Turks efface this hideous picture? Can they deny it? Is this the poor persecuted Turk who has been grossly misunderstood?

"Turkey's history, at home and in foreign relations, is not entirely without blemishes," writes Altémur Kilic, "some mistakes undoubtedly have been made."

This, it must be admitted, is the understatement of the century. Is this all Altémur Kilic has to say in extenuation of one of the blackest records in history?

It would have been different if Altémur Kilic had made a clean breast of it in a manner which is honorable. It would have been different if he had said: "We have had a terrible record as a race. We have committed some terrible and almost unardonable crimes. We make no attempt to justify these crimes. We feel ashamed of them and we keenly regret that it is not within our power to completely efface them. But we are a changed people now, a regenerate and contrite people who are making a desperate effort to change our ways. We are making an honest effort to be worthy of the respectable society of the world."

But this is not the line which Altémur Kilic pursues. On the contrary, he dismisses these crimes as nothing, and further to exacerbate the enormity of his people's crimes, he attempts to put the blame on their victims.

#### The Ottoman State

Another point in which the Turk has

been misunderstood Altemur Kilic would have us understand, is the concept of the new state which the founders of the Ottoman Empire originally postulated. According to this concept, it was the intention of the first Sultans to convert their vast conquest into a federation of races under the title of Ottoman, in which all the conquered nationality groups would have equal opportunity for self-development. He denies the existence of Turkish nationalism until after the liberation of the Balkan peoples in the Nineteenth Century and the liberation of the Arabs after World War I.

"The basic philosophy of the Ottoman Empire," he writes, "has been overlooked or ignored by Western writers. Ottoman statesmen, many of them products of the racial melting pot, wished to evolve a federation of races and religions. True, Islam was the religion of the Empire and the Turkish race was the core, but both Islam and Turkism were in reality not the driving forces of the empire. The word 'Ottoman' meant all the members of the Empire irrespective of race or religion. To preserve this, the Millet system of autonomy was evolved, and privileges were extended to nationalities other than Turks. The best proof of Ottoman idealism was the fact that Armenians, Greeks, and Jews were entrusted with key posts in the state."

This concept of the Ottoman State is supposed to have persisted throughout the centuries until the conquered nations brought about its disintegration through their treachery.

"While other nationalities composing the Ottoman Empire rapidly developed strong national consciousness and nationalism, most Turkish intellectuals clung to the idea of Ottoman nationalism. They hoped that by reforms of one kind or another they could still save the empire and Ottomanism."

"Even the 'Young Ottomans', (Altemur Kilic rejects the term 'Young Turks') who in exile were planning the downfall of Abdul Hamid II and the subsequent reformation of the empire, were predominantly thinking in terms of an Ottoman nation."

Finally, after the Balkan wars, the Turks seem to have despaired of the idea of maintaining the Ottoman State, and have begun to think in terms of Turkish nationalism.

Immediately after this novel interpretation of history, three pages later, Altemur Kilic makes a remarkable statement, oblivious of its damaging consequences to his thesis. "But the strong, warrior Turks," he writes, "asserted and maintained their basic Turkish characteristics, their language, their customs, and finally their Islamic religion in the mixture. Thus Turks (first the Seljuk and then the Ottoman) emerged ultimately as the political and cultural masters of the land."

That, it goes without saying, takes care of the vaunted "Federation of the Races." This is what happens when one attempts to write history by semantics—the substitution of Ottoman for Turks.

There have been other races who made conquests. At one time the Romans conquered nearly the entire known world. Some of the peoples they conquered were superior to them in culture, others were inferior. Yet the Romans, with all their faults, made an imposing contribution to the culture of the conquered races. They gave the world a legal code, they built roads and temples, and they became the principal disseminators of the Hellenic culture.

The British Commonwealth was the product of an almost peaceful conquest. Theirs was a peaceful, even if at times questionable penetration. Their hands were never stained with the blood of women and children as were the hands of the Turks. And yet the British made distinct contributions

to the advancement and the enlightenment of those benighted, backward peoples. They brought along with them the benefits of an enlightened civilization. They established colleges and universities, they promoted culture and education, they introduced a well tempered and comparatively humane administration. They educated the conquered peoples in the principles of self-rule, civil service, and democracy, so that, these very peoples should later rise against them and assert their independence.

How does the record of the Turk compare with the record of the Romans and the British? As proof of the idealism of the "Ottoman State", Altemur Kilic tells us that Armenians, Greeks and Jews were given key posts in the state. This is very much like the man who seizes the home of his neighbor, and then turns around, and in his magnificent generosity, makes the owner of the house his janitor, and his son his kitchen cook. Certainly there were some competent Armenians, Greeks, Albanians and Arabs who held high posts in the Sultan's cabinet, but these men were regimented, not as a manifestation of the principle of the equality of the races, but they were drafted by sheer dint of their talents, and they always operated with the dread realization that they dared not make a false move, or else they would wake up the next morning without a head on their shoulders. The vaunted Ottoman State gave the conquered races no part in the civic administration of the land, no part in the legislation, nor in the executive branch. As Altemur Kilic innocently has admitted, the Turks were the master of the land.

This idea of the master of the land comes closer to the historic reality of the Turkish conquest. When Mohammed Fatih captured Constantinople, he had no idea of founding a federation of races. Had this been the case, there would have been a federal administration, a legislature, a ju-

diciary, and an executive, with equal representation. At the capture of Constantinople Fatih Mehmet found in his hands a vast empire consisting of conquered races, all of whom were infinitely superior to the Turk in civilization and culture. Fatih Mehmet had two alternatives in his hands: either to exterminate the minorities (only recently a Turkish statesman regretfully remarked that the Turks now had to do what Fatih Mehmet had neglected), or to allow them to survive and pay tribute. But extermination was not practical because there were so many to be exterminated. So Fatih Mehmet allowed them to survive, and thus came into existence the system of the Millets.

The system of the Millets in no sense signified a federation of races. It signified a status, the status of the conquerors and the conquered, the celebrated *Kilijimin Hakki Ileh*. From then on the conquered races had to behave, or else suffer the consequences. They were the cattle (*Giavour*) to be milked, and the Ottoman Turks milked the *Giavours* to the hilt.

This conqueror and conquered relationship, far from representing the ideal state in which the component races have an equal share in the assumption of social and civic responsibility, is often condensed in a qualifying word, adjective or sentence which embodies a complete philosophy. Altemur Kilic relates quite a typical case which illustrates this point. After reminding the reader how the Turks, out of the generosity of their hearts, had given the Arabs a few important posts in the Ottoman Government, he writes:

"In spite of all this, Arabs developed a growing contempt for the Turks. They said that 'grass never grew where Turkish horse hooves trod'. They could never tolerate being dominated by a people they considered culturally and socially inferior. Perhaps the bitter remarks of an Arab



nationalist to Cemal Pasha exemplifies this contempt: 'What have you Turks done for us Arabs, that you should now expect friendly treatment on our part?' he asked. 'Are you forgetting that in Constantinople, when you want to call a dog you shout "Arab, Arab". When you say that anything is obscure it is like the hair of an Arab.'

Altémur Kilic cannot understand that you cannot bribe a nation with a few sticks of candy after having robbed them of their most precious property—their freedom. And what amazes us most of all is that he is surprised, that after all that the Turks have done for the Arabs (the few sticks of the candy), the Arabs are ungrateful.

He resents the Arab ingratitude, the Armenian ingratitude, the Albanian ingratitude, the Greek ingratitude, and the ingratitude of all the former component races of the Ottoman State who had no sympathy for them in the hour of their disintegration. "Greeks, Armenians, Arabs, and even those who attained high posts did not hesitate to betray the Ottoman State at the first opportunity."

### The Armenians

But if the Turkish attitude was insulting toward their coreligionists the Arabs, their treatment of their Christian subjects was even more repulsive. The Turks called their Christian subjects *Giavours*, the *Rayahs*, cattle, infidel dogs. And their treatment of these peoples was fully commensurate to the enormity of their insult.

"Western writers," writes Altémur Kilic, "often forgetting or denying that there was a genuine desire for Ottoman nationalism, fail to see how deep were the impressions made by betrayals. For instance, the so-called 'Armenian massacres'—which were by no means one-sided—were the result of reactions caused by constant betrayals. Armenian nationalists and their supporters were ever busy plotting against Ottoman

rule and intriguing with Russian agents. The Sultans referred to the Armenians as 'Our faithful Armenian subjects', but Armenian nationalists betrayed their trust. Armenian terrorists and revolutionaries coming from Russia and aided by the Russians, forced Abdul Hamid II to take drastic action."

Earlier in this discussion we had expressed a degree of satisfaction having at last discovered a Turk who could speak in terms of the Western mind. But this atrocious version of the Armeno-Turkish relationship not only betrays an amazing retardation from the Western mind, not only betrays an abysmal ignorance or a deliberate obfuscation of the facts of history, but is an eloquent demonstration of Altémur Kilic's original admission that, when writing the history of his own people, a Turk can never be objective.

Elsewhere in his book, speaking of Enver Pasha, the author of the murder of one million Armenians in World War I, Altémur Kilic calls him a hero: "Although guilty of forcing Turkey into war and of mismanagement of the Turkish armed forces, Enver was also a true Turkish nationalist who earnestly desired to restore the grandeur of Turkey. He died heroically in pursuit of this ideal while leading a cavalry charge of Basmachi Turks in Central Asia against the Red Army."

To this day, each year, the Turks place a wreath on the tomb of Talaat Pasha, another murderer of the Armenians, proving that, after all that has been written and said, after the condemnation of an entire civilized world, the Turks sanction the deeds of these Hitlerian criminals and they have not the slightest remorse nor regret over their terrible deed. And the man who still justifies Abdul Hamid, Enver Pasha and Talaat Pasha, the murderers of women and children, clearly proves how incorrigible a man or a nation can be, and

how unfit for an acceptance by the West which he so assiduously pursues.

"In his book *Turkey in the World War*," writes Altumur Kilic, "Ahmet Emin Yalman, the Turkish journalist, admits that the Armenians sometimes became the victims of regrettable abuses and violence (that's the way the Turks describe the murder of one million Armenians—J. G. M.), but he also establishes that the so-called massacres were initiated by the Armenians. What is not generally realized is the fact that after the Russian revolution that Armenians massacred some 40,000 Turks in the Turkish territory occupied by Russia."

We wonder if Altumur Kilic can be so naive as to seriously think that the world will believe this unabashed lie. The Armenians initiated the massacres? Are we hearing right, or have our auditory senses undergone a complete black out. If the Armenian massacre of 40,000 Turks after the Russian revolution provoked the massacres, then what shall we say of the massacre of 300,000 Armenians in 1895-96, long before the Russian revolution? If the Armenians massacred 40,000 Turks, which is not true, they would still be short to the tune of 960,000 massacred Turks to even up the scales. All of which goes to prove how flippantly history is at times written.

But you have not seen all. Altumur Kilic goes even one better. "Turkish response to Armenian excesses was comparable, I believe," he writes, "to what might have been the American response, had the German Americans of Minnesota and Wisconsin revolted on behalf of Hitler during World War II."

This disastrous analogy is at once an insult to the intelligence and the humanity of both the American Government and its people. In the first place it was not the Armenian "excesses" which provoked the Armenian deportations of 1915. At that time the Armenian Revolutionary Federa-

tion which was the voice of the Armenian people had advised the Turkish political leaders against the folly of siding with the Central Allies, but, should the Turkish Government decide to go through with its intentions, they had assured, the Armenians would fulfil their duty as loyal citizens in the defense of the fatherland. This the Armenians did. But the Armenian able-bodied youth were drafted in the Turkish army, then were disarmed and drafted in the so-called Labor Battalions where they were systematically massacred. Realizing the enormity of the situation with all its dreadful implications should they make a false step, the Armenians had bent over backwards not to give the Turks any cause of provocation. The Armenians of Turkey had made it very clear to the Turks that they had no control over their brethren in the Russian Empire, and if the latter enlisted or volunteered in the Russian armies, their action could not possibly be ascribed to their kinsmen in Turkey in terms of treachery. There were no provocations, there were no "excesses". The extermination of the Armenians was a deliberate plan of the Turkish government and the Turkish nationalists. This fact has been established by a thousand sources and eye witnesses, and we have published these facts a thousand times. No serious historian has ever questioned the validity of this truth.

But even if the German Americans of Minnesota and Wisconsin had been caught in treacherous action, by no stretch of the wildest imagination can one conceive that the American Government would have turned around and massacred the entire population of German descent in the United States. At the most, the ring leaders would have been arrested and tried by due process of law. The case of the Japanese American colony in California is in point, where the Americans of Japanese extraction, for considerations of state security

and the safety of the incumbents, were moved elsewhere until the termination of the war. Not a Japanese was executed and not a Japanese nose was bled, nor a single Japanese piece of personal property was confiscated despite the infamy of Pearl Harbor whose criminal gravity far transcends the perfectly justifiable action of Russian Armenians who enlisted in Russian armies.

Because their kinsmen on the other side of the ocean had been guilty of a perfidious deed, the American Government did not wreak its vengeance on the innocents. The Armenian volunteers in the Russian armies did not commit an act of perfidy against the Turkish government. They were the subjects of another nation and they had a right to fight for what they considered their cause. It was unfair to punish the Armenians of Turkey for an action which had taken place outside of the Turkish domain. But, even if there were individual Turkish Armenians who had gone over to the Russians, again that did not justify a civilized government to take the terrible retribution which the Turkish Government took on the rest of the innocents.

Elsewhere in his work, speaking of the emergence of the state of Israel, Altemur Kilic shows an understanding mind. "No objective person," he writes, "can oppose the centuries old aspirations of Jews to establish an independent and sovereign state." And yet, throughout his work, he is reluctant to extend this same understanding to the Armenians and the Arabs. He is resentful of all the former components of the Ottoman state—the Greeks, the Armenians, the Arabs, the Bulgarians, the Rumanians, the Serbs, the Albanians,—because, in his opinion, these peoples had been ungrateful to the Turks. Because they had dared to rise against their masters. Because they had recovered their independence. Because they had brought about

the downfall of Fatih Mehmet's wonderful "Confederation of the Races".

The question arises, if the Jews have a right to their centuries old aspirations of establishing an independent and sovereign state, why shouldn't the Armenians have the same right. Why shouldn't all the above-mentioned peoples have the same right? Why should an admittedly perfectly natural aspiration be a virtue when it applies to a remote nation, but the same thing should be a crime when it impinges on the Turk? What makes the Turk so exceptional, so high and mighty that there should be a finality to the conquests of his Yataghan?

Later in his work, Altemur Kilic makes quite a case of Turkish minority rights in the Island of Cyprus. Throughout the Cyprus crisis Turkish diplomacy ran on the double in its effort to frustrate the Enosis with Greece. Eloquent arguments were advanced by the Turks ironically enough, in behalf of the sanctity of the principle of self-determination, and all this ado over a pitiful minority of 18 percent in an overwhelming majority of 80 percent Greek population. To defend this precious little Turkish minority sophistic arguments were advanced that "the principle of self-determination is applicable to nations as a whole and not to 'pocket majorities', such as in Cyprus."

The Turkish delegate to the U. N., Ambassador Seyfullah Esin insisted that "the principle of self-determination cannot be applied to a territory but only to peoples living there. After all, self-determination is one of the most fundamental human rights. Just as the Greek Cypriots desire to be liberated from foreign rule in order to live under the Greek flag, so do the Turks of Cyprus wish to be freed of alien rule and live under the Turkish flag."

The Turks become very zealous in their defense of human rights when any one



steps on their toe but they have an entirely different attitude when the same principle is applied to them. They made such an ado over a pitiful minority of 80,000 in a population of nearly half a million, yet it never occurred to them to apply the same concern when the fate of a whole nation was involved. The three million Armenians living in the Ottoman state were people and not merely a territory. The component races of the Byzantine Empire which the Turks conquered by "the right of my sword" were peoples and not merely territories. Furthermore, the territories belonged to them. They were the owners. Why should not these peoples have the right to their self-determination? Who asked the Turk to come over, seize their land, and enslave them in the first place? Why should it be a crime if these peoples revolt and recover their independence?

The trouble with the Turks is that they lack the capacity to understand the psychology of a conquered people, because, perhaps, themselves have never had the experience. The Turks committed their unpardonable sin when they conquered the peoples of Asia Minor and eastern Europe. It was only natural that the conquered peoples resented this piratical act on the part of a savage tribe and hated him for it. It was natural that they would never be reconciled with their despoilation and, sooner or later, would rise against their masters. Being only despoilers, the Turks never understood the psychology of this smouldering hatred. Instead of trying to understand why peoples react the way they do under certain circumstances, why they clench their teeth and endure, why they cannot control their sympathies, why they abhor tyranny and why they aspire to freedom, the Turks resent every time an enslaved people rises against them, as if they owned the bodies and the souls of these men whom they had conquered.

We wonder what the Turks would have done if the shoe had been on the other foot. How eloquent they would have waxed in their defense of the right to self-determination, the "18 percent and the 80 percent", the "pocket majorities" and the "pocket minorities", and the fine distinctions between "territories" and "peoples." We can just about imagine how they would have raised the welkin should 20 million Turks have been held in subjection for six centuries.

The Turks robbed the Armenians of their ancestral homeland and their only insolent answer is: "We Turks took your territories by the sword, and if you Armenians want them back you will have to do it the same way." The Turks massacred one million Armenians in four months and yet they worship the memory of Enver and Talaat, the assassins of women and children, as their national heroes. They would have us believe that they are a regenerate people now, and yet, amazingly enough, after the condemnation of a whole world, there was not a single Turk during the past forty years who had the decency of admitting that his people had done the Armenians a great wrong. That grizzly reluctance was the criterion of their total destitution of any sense of regeneration. And now, these very Turks complain to us that, philosophically, and ideologically, and temperamentally they have been "Western" but the West has rejected them. The Turks have a long way to travel yet before they will understand the Western mind.

### The War of Independence

The revolt of Mustafa Kemal was the Turkish reaction to the menace of their survival. Had there been no Mustafa Kemal, another national leader would have risen to respond to the call of the hour. This was one of those historic moments when the combination of the circumstance

and the man of the hour make history. The circumstance was the apparent dissolution of the Turkish state; the man of the hour was Mustafa Kemal the Ataturk.

Turkey had been defeated in the war, but long before her defeat, her fate had been decided in an infamous pact of despoliation among the Allies. After the Turk's defeat, the remaining captive peoples of the Ottoman Empire, the Armenians and the Arabs, of course, should have been liberated. This liberation had been envisaged in the Wilsonian Declaration and had been cemented by solemn promises on the part of the Allied Powers. Furthermore, the Armenians and the Arabs had brought in their share of the contribution to the Allied victory — the Kilijimin Hakki Ilel which the Turks always practice and demand. Therefore, they not only were entitled to, but they had earned their right to national freedom. Had the Allies been contented with that much, they might have been able to make an appeal to the Turkish sense of justice (if they have any) and the ensuing righteous national resentment might have been avoided. The Turks might have been satisfied with this much of a territorial sacrifice to eliminate the last vestiges of minority problems and to whip their remaining population into an homogenous and compact political entity.

But the Allied iniquity seemed to have neither bounds nor restraint. They were out to carve the Turkish state among themselves, regardless of the feelings of the Turkish people. This, of course, was as stupid as their treatment of Germany after their victory. We might go so far as to state that, had Turkey been carved at the time between Russia, Greece, Italy, France and Britain, the partition would not have solved the problem nor would it have been enduring. It would only have created a host of new and per-

petually harassing problems. The Turks are not the type of people who will take the abuse of their national rights sitting down. They would have risen in rebellion over and over again. They would have made life miserable for the Allies. And in this struggle, our sympathy would have been with the Turks, much the same as we Armenians expect that Turkish sympathy will be on our side in our struggle for our liberation.

Mustafa Kemal was a great national leader as well as a great statesman. He saved Turkey from complete dissolution. His reforms, much like Peter the Great, were high-handed and dictatorial, but if a beginning into democracy were to be made, among an illiterate and backward people like the Turks, it could have been effected only through a firm hand. The Turkish people should be eternally grateful to Mustafa Kemal for revamping the old corrupt and reactionary system of the Sultans and for setting them on the right track to recovery. He would have been a greater man had he done right by the Armenians, and if his hands were not stained by the blood of Smyrna. The carnage of Smyrna was a heinous reversal to Turkish barbarism of the early centuries, and the Armenian will never forgive him for his abrogation of the Sevres Treaty and his collusion with the Soviet in bringing about the downfall of the Independent Republic of Armenia.

### On the Fence

Much has been said and written, either in condemnation or in extenuation of Turkish neutrality in World War II. This is another one of those controversial questions which perhaps will never be definitely settled. The merits of the case depends from what angle you look at it.

A strong case may be made from the Turkish viewpoint which Altemur Kilic

has accomplished with admirable competence. He has recorded the facts and figures of history with remarkable precision, as well as with convincing objectivity. He even admits that his nation failed to carry out her contractual commitments in two cases, when Italy invaded France, and when Germany invaded Greece. But even then he marshals imposing evidence, and invokes the testimony of British high ranking authority in proof of the utter futility and the folly of Turkish intervention under the circumstances.

The Turkish case is more than intelligible. What the Turks are trying to say to us is: "We committed the folly of taking part in one war and we got scorched. We are not going to get scorched by joining another war. We have just rid ourselves of one nightmare. We are a poor people, without resources, without a solvent economy. Our army is not adequately equipped. If we go against Germany, our cities and towns will be bombed, and we shall come out of the war with fresh scars. We just made a beginning in our national recovery and in the ways of democracy, and we are not going to jeopardize that noble effort by joining in another foolish war." The Turkish policy at the time, bequeathed by the Ataturk, was: no expansionism, no irredentism, no participation in new wars, and complete dedication to the task of consolidating the new state.

Ismet Inonu carried out this policy to perfection, and it took a firm and resolute hand on his part not to be shaken. Pressures were brought to bear on Turkey from all sides, the Allies and the Germans, but Ismet Inonu was neither intimidated by threats nor wangled by hypocritical promises. He concluded pacts with both sides—a half dozen nations—bilaterally and tripartite. He promised them all either aid or neutrality as the case demanded, yet he never fully committed himself to either

side. He led both sides to believe that he was with them against the other, yet he always left a loophole to crawl through. The Soviet made life miserable for him, and any other man less firm than he would long since have succumbed to the Hitlerian blandishments. The public opinion in his country, as well as the chauvinist parties, at times tried to bend him to the German side, yet he met the public opinion and the opposition parties with an indomitable resolution and, in the end, he won.

The neutrality of the Turks during World War II is one of the cleverest exhibitions of national statesmanship of the Twentieth Century. It is an achievement which is unparelled.

The Turks, of course, exploited this neutrality to make some profits on the side, and the treatment of their contractual commitments was not entirely chivalrous. They accepted a bribe of 15 million pounds sterling from the French for the promise of siding with them but for which they did nothing. And they made some fat profits by the sale of their chrome to Germany. By the terms of the Balkan Pact which the Turks themselves had enacted as a security measure on their western flank they were bound to go to Greece's aid when attacked, yet when Hitler invaded Greece, the Turks stood on the fence. Altemur Kilic admits this ignoble stand, and in justification, invokes the aid of the British Ambassador Sir Hugh Knatchbull-Hugessen who said:

"Turkish statesmen were better informed on the situation than were the British: They were aware that France could not be saved, that the Balkan Entente had virtually collapsed, that Germany having finished the business in the west might turn her attention, (as she subsequently did) to southeastern Europe and they knew they were not equipped to fight the German army. To plunge thus handicapped into the melee at a moment when one of

their allies was down and out and the other in deadly danger might have earned for Turkey imperishable memories of heroic self-sacrifice, but it would have done very little good."

True enough, yet the reversal of this situation offers a valid test of the honorability of intentions. Had the Turks been the first to be attacked and the treaty-bound Greeks had stood on the sides, the Turks would hardly have thought much of the value of a Greek's word. Furthermore, it will be observed that Turkey's behaviour at the hour of Greece's trial was hardly in keeping with Turkish character.

If the Turks have read their history they will remember that, the very origin of their nation was conceived in an act of superb chivalry. Early in the Mongol era, when the tribe of Osman had been driven to the west, one day a battle was being fought on the plains of Anatolia between the forces of two tribes. One of the armies was highly superior in numbers and was slowly beating down their inferior antagonists who were fighting a valiant but futile battle. The Turks, spectators of the scene, did not even know who the two sides were, but without hesitation threw their weight on the weak side and turned the scales of the battle. It later turned out that they had been fighting against the Mongols.

Developing his thought in exoneration of the Turks, Sir Hugh adds sarcastically: "Where they (the Turks) were expected to fight is not clear." And the answer is, the Turks could have declared war on Germany and let the Germans come to them. The Turks have boasted no end about their vaunted "one million bayonets", and when it comes to the Russians their contention has always been that, should they have to deal with the Russians, even if overwhelmed by sheer numbers, they would kill, kill, and kill until the last Turk fell dead. We did not see that kind of guts on

the part of the Turk in the hour of Greece's crisis.

Notwithstanding it all, the Turkish neutrality in World War II stands out as a tremendous exhibition of firmness, courage and statesmanship, and if, in the meanwhile, the Turks also exploited the situation to their profit they learned the filthy art from their European masters. They proved that they are superior to the Europeans in diplomacy. They beat their masters at their own game.

### With the West

This strain of the Turk being of the West, from the West and with the West runs through the entire work like a red herring. Over and over again Altemur Kilic stresses the notion that Turkey is a part of the Western texture, militarily, geographically, strategically, philosophically and ideologically.

The philosophy, the biology and the ideology aside, it must be admitted that, throughout the post-war era, Turkish adherence to the Western cause not only is indisputable, but it constitutes the most remarkable development in the experience of the West.

It may be unhesitatingly admitted now, regardless of the underlying motives, in the struggle against the Soviet and the Communist ideology, the anti-Soviet bulwark as personified in the NATO has no better, no more resolute, no more consistent, and no more dependable friend than Turkey. The Turk has a more realistic understanding of the Eastern peoples, and by the same token he has understood the nature of the Soviet menace far better than any people of Europe or the American continent. France at times has vacillated, Britain has often gone on a tangent, Greece has at times remained sullen, but Turkey has remained as resolute, if not even more so, than Western Germany, South Korea and

Chiang Kai Check's Taiwan. Turkey has never once hesitated or vacillated in her position as far as Soviet imperialism is concerned.

If it is not too bold to say, we might even venture to assert with definite certainty that, had the Turk commanded the resources, the military facilities, the technical know how, and the limitless wealth and material resources of the United States, today the swashbuckling Nikita Khrushchev would not be striding the earth, spitting rockets and sputniks. When it comes to a comprehension of the nature of the Soviet menace, the Turks have shown greater consistency, more firmness, more courage and more guts than perhaps any other nation in the world.

The trouble with the Turk is his insensibility to nobler human instincts, or his incapacity to respond to the challenge of spiritual stimuli, particularly as applied to his treatment of the Armenians. If the

Turks want to be truly modernized they must act and behave like civilized peoples. The Turks lost the Bulgarians, the Rumanians, the Greeks, the Serbs, the Albanians and the Arabs. This is the way it should be. The Turks had no right to resent the liberation of these peoples. But the Turks have not done right by the Armenians and the Armenians still have an account to settle. There is the Sevres Treaty which should be revived and there is a Lausanne which should be rescinded. When that is done the Turks will have demonstrated their good faith and their worthiness to be accepted in the western family. The million lives the Turks took in World War I they cannot restore. But they can at least do what Adenauer's Germany did to the ravished Jews. They can prove their nobility by admitting their crime and by making restitution for the damage they have done. Then, and only then will the Turks be worthy of respectable society.



**CORRECTION:** In James G. Mandalian's article on Kurkjian's *History of Armenia*, *Armenian Review*, Summer, 1959, the second sentence of the last paragraph on page 54 should read: "To this end, in May of 1920, it sent a delegation etc." instead of "August of 1920" as it erroneously appears due to a typographical oversight.



# *The Master's Influence*

P. K. THOMAJAN

Perhaps, one of the greatest blessings in this world is to come in contact with a master spirit. To serve such an evolved entity is a high privilege that affords an Olympian lift. It is an experience of radiant enlightenment, a conditioning that tempers one's soul to endure any mortal ordeal without duress . . . ameliorating one into an ambient being.

The master moves humbly with a deferent tolerance and clearance of forces, visible and invisible. His pensive omniscience astutely observes all checks and balances in the scheme of things . . . thereby maintaining a sensitized equilibrium between elements within and without.

His prescience of potentials touches secret springs of the subconscious, giving release to inner resources. The thrust of his trust, accompanied by a psychic discharge

of energy, empowers one to penetrate any ordained objective. His presence has an aura'd orientation and he ceaselessly beams light on the path.

His cosmic sympathies exude largesse of understanding that creates effortless communication.

His alchemical attitudes transmute gross acts into golden realizations, endowing existence with a sense of fulfillment and refulfillment.

Calmly, he tranquillizes our restless qualms . . . benignly bathing our babblings in pure silence.

The master initiates us into attuned communion . . . into an awareness of *our* godhood . . . graciously endowing us with a touch of immortality during our earthly tenure.

# THE SEVEN DISPOSSESSED

K. MEHIAN

They had come through deep precipitous canyons, snow-capped mountains, burning deserts and thick unbroken forests.

Yet no one knew whence each of them had come, or how far he had traveled.

They had come because they had heard there was a king in the land of the Israelites who was exceedingly wise and endowed by Jehovah. That his dominion extended from the Euphrates to Cassion-Kaper on the shores of the Red Sea. And that, lastly, it was thanks to him that "God's chosen people" lived the life of a terrestrial paradise.

They came to a halt in front of Solomon's temple and said they had come to petition justice and happiness from the just and wise king.

"Lead them to the temple," commanded Solomon when informed of their petition, "let in also the public. And since they have come to ask for justice, let also the High Priest and the aged councillors be present."

And the seven Dispossessed entered the Lilly Gate of the Temple and advanced as far as the Hall of the Heathen where, according to the Israeli law, every one could enter. Opposite it was the Beautiful Gate which led into the Women's Quarters, with arched bronze shutters, and in front of the gate, inscribed on beautiful columns, was the warnings of the death penalty to all those who ventured to trespass beyond.

A little later the councillors filed in, all

of them white-haired and majestic: the aged Haman who was renowned from the days of David, and Ahimaaz the High Priest of Israel. The latter was wearing a pontifical Ephod of two folds, embroidered and without sleeves, parting from the arms and connected from the shoulders with a bejeweled buckle. He wore on his head a miter of silk and from his neck hung a priceless medallion set in with a sparkling onyx.

On either side of the High Priest and the councillors, as an honor guard, were lined up the Benjamins the famous archers. They were armed with bows of bone and steel and lances, helmets and javelins.

Presently, Solomon made his entry amid deep silence. The aged councillors rose to their feet and shouted in unison:

Shalom Lekna—Peace be unto you.

When the King of Israel was ensconced on his ivory throne he saw confronting him the Seven Dispossessed, lined up as the Irony of Creation, as the Tragedy of Life. Because, the first of them was blind, the second lame, the third hunch-backed, the fourth deaf, the fifth dumb, the sixth paralyzed, and the seventh a fool.

The one who was blind spoke first:

"Lord King, I was born in a palace whose floor and the ceilings, one of my father's butlers has told me, were made of the wood of Ophir. Muslin shades screened its windows and choicest silks went into

the makings of the royal couches on which my father, as the king of the land, was caressed by rosy-fleshed maidens. Our butler has told me that our palace garden had many fountains, spouting the seven wonder waters of seven springs, and when the sun sheds its golden rays upon the waters, their spray turns into seven hues of mists, diamonds, emeralds and carbuncles, enchanting the human vision. He has told me, too, that the sunset over our woods is like the inflammation of the roses, one of the wonders of Creation. And he has told me of flowers whose configuration is a miniature wonder creation with extraordinary colorations. As to the starry skies above, they give the impression of a magnificent and ineffable sublimity. Our court butler has told me that all this have been created for man's enjoyment, as the supreme being of God's creation. I, Lord King, have strength, a mind, and even—they tell me—physical beauty, as they tell me you have. But I am blind and unable to see and enjoy all this which have been created for my enjoyment. I am one bereft, dispossessed. I walk when they lead me the way. I grope in the light when others race through the dark. And I do not see the passion of those blue and black eyes which is aflame and which inflames. I am miserable, Lord King, and troubled. I want to revolt against this Creation's injustice, the high priest of our royal temple holds me by the hand and leads me inside the cold temple, and says to me: 'Kneel down before this altar; it is at once the truth and the justice.' And I have been worshipping and sacrificing for years. Yet divine justice seems so slow in coming. You, Lord King, are the monarch of your chosen people, and they say, the wisest of the wise, the favored of Jehovah in beauty, riches, glory, power and enjoyment. How can you consider yourself just as you see me who am deprived of life's choicest gift

—the light of my eyes?"

Solomon who, his arms resting on the twin supports of his throne, was listening quietly, spoke up.

"You say you are the scion of a king, and I also see that you are strong and intelligent, and you have come to me to seek your share of life's enjoyment. And yet, you who are blind, see nothing on this world?"

"Nothing, Lord King."

"And yet you have been able to see one thing, your blindness. And you have turned it into a darkness which has surrounded you body and soul. And you have forgotten that the sunset of which they have spoken to you, the fountains whose spray forms the rainbow, the flowers with their woven colorations, and the entire world with all its colors and blooms is a world of mere illusion. And that which you claim you have been deprived of and against which you revolt is only the visible, the transitory and the illusory. The pitiful, even. . ."

"What are you saying, Lord King?"

"Are you surprised? Well, tell me, you who have come here as one of the Seven Dispossessed, have you at least seen those who travelled with you through snow-capped mountains and the thick forests, as far as the burning desert of our land?"

"No, Lord King."

"You told me you long for the passion of blue and black eyes. You long for the sunset, the colors of the flowers, the spraying of the waters. Is it not so?"

"With an irresistible longing, O wise Lord."

"But have you ever seen those very eyes made glassy by the chill of death, or tear-drenched by the terror and the suffering? Or by the dark treacherous looks?"

"Human eyes, my Lord?" the blind man exclaimed, surprised.

"Yes. And have you ever seen the sunset or the ruin of those very rosy-fleshed mai-

dens? Exhausted, wasted, heavily weighted down by the painful memory of past enjoyments? Or the rivers of blood and the piles of corpses, their choking cry still gurgling in their throats? And lastly, those same flowers now withered, or the sprouting rainbows reduced to puddles of mud? You remember Samson, do you not?"

"Of course, Lord King."

"And you surely have heard about his superhuman strength."

"He was the legend of our land's children, my Lord."

"That legendary Samson, like you, longed for the plump body and the passionate eyes of Dalilah. He enjoyed her. Yet with those very eyes which could see the light he could not see the plot in her eyes which was couched there, ready to betray him."

"Strange," the blindman exclaimed.

"On the contrary it is very understandable. That is the blindness of love, or the blindness of the heart. There are various types of blindness of the mind. But be that as it may. You have heard, it seems, that I have enjoyed the most beautiful of women."

"But Lord King."

"Never mind, you listen to me. Do you want me to make a gift of one of them to you?"

"O forgive, wise Lord, if . . . the blind man was embarrassed."

"Bring here the black-haired Moabite," Solomon turned to his guards.

When the Moabite girl was brought in there was a deep silence in the hall. Her beauty, like a king, instantly dominated all hearts and lips. All were staring at her slender figure and large deep eyes, shadowed by her long lashes.

"Take her to him," commanded Solomon.

And they led the Moabite girl to the blind man.

"Feel her," commanded Solomon, "caress her body, her figure, her hair."

"But Lord King."

"Why? Because of us? The multitude? But is it not true that you do not see us?"

"Yes, but I feel your presence."

"So that's it. But I command you to caress her. Don't be embarrassed Ahimaaz, and you Haman," Solomon turned to the High Priest and the Councillor.

And the blind man, in full sight of all, caressed the Moabite girl. He caressed her hair, her figure, her face. And while he was still caressing, Solomon asked him.

"She is beautiful, is she not?"

"She is wonderful, Lord King."

"And did you see that beauty?"

"No, of course not, Lord King. I felt it."

"Because that's the way you set yourself. But you who enjoyed her beauty, tell me, from the standpoint of enjoying her, are you not happier than I that you did not see that beautiful body one day, scarcely out of the arms of the 'handsome and wise Solomon,' was holding an illicit affair with one of the vilest and most insignificant guards under the dark arches of the palace? Do you still want to see her now?"

"Never, Lord King?"

"O curses," shouted the spectators, "away with her, away from the temple."

When they took away the girl, the wise king once again turned to the blind man.

"I enjoyed, not only those of Israel, but perhaps the most beautiful girls of the world. I enjoyed their deep and passionate looks. With my eyes I saw lily white flesh, supple and bare, had them dance in my mansion, thinking I would find in the enjoyment the meaning of my existence. But the life of enjoyment soon seemed meaningless to me. Vanity of vanities."

"But it seems vain to me because of my blindness."

"Do you want to fill up that vanity? Look with closed eyes into your own inner world, and with the vision of your mind,

tear off that darkness which you have created in your bitterness for being deprived of your eyesight. Try to see the fevers and the longings of your soul, the outburst of your inner passions, their colors. You will see colors there which never will pale. Branches which never bend. Lights which never darken. Or a world in which the light is permanent and beauty fadeless as long as you yourself are alive, after which this world will be entombed like you, and you shall never experience the anguish of parting like us. Do you hear the birds which warble? That's one of the music of my palace."

"Yes, Lord King, and I am fascinated. I even am disturbed, yet I would still like to see them on the branches."

"And I listen to them with closed eyes. Blessed art thou who hast not seen those birds, falling down lifeless with bloodied hearts. Happy is he who only hears the life but never sees it, my son. Have you ever thought about this?"

"No, Lord King, since on the contrary I have always longed to see that life."

"And that longing has been a stumbling block to your happiness. Man is unfortunate in his 'I,' but that 'I' is the totality of those passions. We who are endowed with the light of our eyes, long for what we see as beautiful. You are the least unfortunate of all, because you see only one thing, your blindness, and you crave for only one thing, the light of your eyes. Ah that I had been less unfortunate."

"And I thought you were the happiest of all, not only among men but among the kings, O wise Lord."

"That, however, is your opinion."

"It is also our opinion," voiced all the spectators.

"Yours too?" Solomon asked his councillors.

"Not a single doubt, Lord King," spoke Haman, "the King of Israel is the happiest

of all kings, and that is clear as the light of the sun."

"You, too, are of the same opinion, is it not so?" Solomon asked the other Dispossessed.

"Of course, wise Lord," replied the lame, "you are happy as one endowed by Jehovah."

"Say 'Yelohimen'" suddenly exclaimed Ahimaz the High Priest, "the Israelite does not pronounce His name".

Solomon, who had crossed his arms across his chest, smiled bitterly and said,

"You all are blind who, with your eyes open, have not seen the inner tragedy of Israel's 'happy' king, the tragedy which is the source of both his 'wisdom' and his 'happiness'. Oh, his deep conviction that the enjoyment of this world is vanity. Is it not so?" he again addressed himself to the Dispossessed.

"It is true, Lord King," shouted the four Dispossessed in unison, "the blind is blind because he sees only his blindness."

The dumb was astounded. But the fool only smiled.

"And you?" Solomon turned to the second, "wherin are you unfortunate and what do you seek in Israel?"

"I belong to a race", the second man began, "which lives in a land of towering mountains and narrow passes. We neither have your burning sun nor the flat expanses of this country. I was surprized, Lord King, when I saw how slowly men walk in this country, wrapped in delicate silken robes, and diadems on their heads. Whereas, the men of my country climb up and down the steep cliffs like mountain goats. We have no standstill, and what is called life in our country is a perpetual change of place. It is an invasion, from crest to crest. Or a fight which leads to mortal falls or mad attacks. My race is swift and skilful. Here you gaze at the



endless desert and the falling sun, and you do not see the horizon. Whereas we have perpetually rising and falling horizons in our land. This is the impelling force of our land and at the same time the calling of our race. But I am lame and powerless to climb and to invade. I am the best marksman of our race. I have the strongest eye in battle. But my kinsmen accompany me only when they are in retreat. You who, my Lord, are king, and perhaps have fought in battle, know what a wonderful thing it is to attack and strike the enemy. But I am deprived of this greatest of life's joys. Our hardy lads, armed with darts and javelins, and sometimes mounted on their golden maned steeds, span the vast expanse with lightning rapidity, fight with a song on their lips, and when necessary, under the golden light of the midday sun, waving their bare arms, like victorious gods, return to the tops of our mountains. Then I feel the collapse of my heart. What is life, if not an upward flight, a conquest, a glory. And while my comrades, ever moving and impeccable, return home, with the falling dusk, so my soul sinks. And they tell us of their battles. They flaunt their loot. And each one of our girls, slender and lovely, with white flesh and black eyes, joyfully flings herself into the arms of a brave, whereas I could have been the most attractive of them all and could have won the greatest glory. At sight of all this, I die moment by moment. That's the reason why I am unhappy and have come to you to find my happiness."

Solomon listened to him in admiration, looked deep into the eyes of this wild youth, thought a moment, sighed and said:

"My son, I live the tragedy of your soul and I comprehend your longing which burns your being. You say you are young."

"And strong, Lord King."

"That is apparent from your sturdy physique, the color of your face and the

muscles in your arms. You also say you are a good marksman."

"The best, Lord King."

"And keen of eyesight."

"Yes, wise Lord."

"But you only say it, or perhaps you have heard it from others. Have you tried to convert those eyes into a power? To turn it into a positive force in the sight of those around you and to utilize that power? And you who have come with this sightless youth?"

"I myself led him, Lord King."

"Good! And while you were leading him, did you think why he felt so unfortunate and so powerless in life?"

"I heard it a while ago, Lord King."

"And after hearing it, you did not think of it, is it not so?"

"No, my Lord."

"You think you are unfortunate because you are lame, whereas your misfortune is not your lameness but your insistence on the thought that you are weak because you are lame. Only those things exist which we see or we think about. The blind, with his sightless eyes, sees only the darkness of his eyes. You, on the other hand, do not see the strength of your eyes only through your seeing eyes. You do not even see the lame eagles perching on the tops of those sublime peaks who sometimes are the most formidable. And, limpingly you have come here simply to protest. Namely, to acquire by wishing what you do not have and what the others have, without reflecting that man is man because he is deprived of things which others have, and possesses things which others do not have. You could have been a master with those eyes of yours."

"You mock me, Lord King, a lame man like me."

"Not at all. You said your kinsmen take you along only in their retreats. And you who are the best marksman, have you ever

tried to convert one of those retreats into a glorious attack, forcing your comrades to follow you? Have you ever tried to force your soul into those eyes, to convert the might of your eyes into a powerful, collective will, and to dominate, first, by insuring the victory and the glory of those around you?"

"No, I have never tried it, Lord King."

"And you never even followed the example of Deborah who became a self-styled 'king' despite the fact she was a woman and judged Israel. Seated under a palm tree, she ruled by the might of her soul, while Barak, the commander of her troops dared march only when accompanied by her. How naive you are, my son, to think that you have come down from your mountain peaks where even the sun is weak, and have come to seek your happiness with a king who has perfect feet yet he is deprived of the pleasure of going where he wants. You have the pain of your dispossession while I suffer because I cannot use what I have. I ask you, do you wish to have sound feet and endlessly sit on a throne, or do you want to have a world at the disposal of your lame feet?"

"The latter, my Lord."

"Then which of the two of us is the more unfortunate? See, I am obliged to pass the whole day under these arches. That which is extensive and mighty is my rule, not I myself. I thought I had ransomed a world by bringing here what all is outside, music, women, luxury, color and dance. I laugh at it all to this day. And I feel that my soul still is empty. Have they ever told you when I became king?"

"You were born king, wise Lord."

"But, my son, it is not enough to be born of a king to be a king. Nor to be born handsome and strong. These are not enough even to be a man."

"But they make man happy, Lord King."

"Happy? Perhaps. I became king when I was sixteen, I took the crown from my father David, in exchange for which I built this magnificent temple which, nominally, is my glory, but it was the conception of my father and the creation of others. Is not the same true of glory, generally, in this life? It seems you have heard about the Queen of Sheba."

"Yes, Lord King, they used to speak of it in our mountains. They used to say she came to you, loaded with gift-bearing caravans."

"And, with her matchless beauty. I enjoyed, together with her gifts, the beauty of her body. And I, being a king, a monarch, rich, handsome and wise, as I showed the Queen of Sheba these magnificent buildings of our land, and she wanted to know who had built them, I felt that my soul collapsed within me, as much as yours, as you say, when your kinsmen return home, victorious from the battle. And I pronounced the name of Adoniram with envy, the man who sings my praises."

"You exaggerate, Lord King," Haman the aged tried to interrupt. "Adoniram was ingenious because of you."

"But are you not exaggerating, aged wise man," interrupted Solomon, "you who well know that your King Solomon was even delighted when Adoniram, the donor of his swimming pools, died under the glances of traitors."

"What is the King saying? Impossible, impossible," murmurs from among the spectators.

And while the High Priest was trying to take the floor, Solomon continued.

"This was the irony of Yelohim who had created me, mocking my glory, or the vanity of that glory. Is it not true, O ye the Disposessed?"

"It is true, Lord King," said the four Disposessed. The deaf, stunned by the

confusion, kept staring. The fool again smiled.

And Solomon turned to the third man and asked him.

"And wherein are you unhappy, and what have you come to seek with me?"

The third Dispossessed who was a hunchback replied:

"Lord King, I live in land where the orange trees shade the lanes, the blue waters of the sea are swayed by the gentle zephyrs, the sun casts a golden net on the waves and the olive trees bend their branches over the rippling waters. We have neither snow-covered peaks nor your burning desert. I have been cradled by the gentle sway of lukewarm wavelets under the canopy of starry skies."

"You were then born in a land of dreams."

"Where men live the life with an unusual delight. And also free. . ."

"Meaning?" Solomon interposed.

"Meaning, if the wise King will pardon me, we live in our land without a king and also without a heavenly god."

"Like the wicked," the High Priest was shocked, and turning to Solomon, "his presence defiles the sanctity of our temple. He should be thrown out."

"Out, out," the crowd grumbled.

The hunchback paled. Solomon, however, commanded him to continue.

And the hunchback continued:

"Our gods live close to us, on our mountains and hills where the sun each morning places a crown on their heads and the land a floral wreath."

"Whom do you worship then?" Solomon asked, "have you no temples? Prayers, sacrificial offerings?"

"Neither sacrifices nor prayers, Lord King. I was surprised when I saw this huge temple. We worship beauty."

"Beauty?" the councillors were shocked.

"Yes, the handsome pose of man, his magnificent physique, the beauty of his strength. And we offer him our glory, our affection, our Hosannas and our laurels."

"And do you submit to him?" Haman was curious.

"No, we strive toward him. In our land striving for beauty is the supreme calling. Beauty verily is our worship. Whereas I, Lord King, as you see, am deprived of the possibility of that supreme aspiration. I am a hunchback, and consequently, ugly. I, who as they say in my land, have a sensitive heart, who at times feels the surge of emotions in me, warming my entire being. And the turbulence rocks in me every time the handsome braves of our land snatch their prizes amid the mad applause of the crowd. Then everything around me becomes clouded, an oppressive sadness fills my heart and I begin to reflect that I am the most unfortunate among men."

"You?" Solomon was disturbed.

"Yes, Lord King, and I have come to seek your advice and to merit your sympathy."

"And for this you have gone through mountain and desert. Hear me then. You said beauty is what you strive for, and man is the object of your worship. But you did not tell me wherein beauty is beautiful in your land, and wherein man is man. Look at me (he stands up) and watch me without this robe (he throws off his royal robe). Is this the beautiful to which you strive?"

"Yes, Lord King. You could have a throne of worship in our land, and a laurel on your forehead."

"Really?" Solomon laughed loudly, as he covered himself with his robe and sat down.

The councillors joined in the laughter. So did the blind man. And the lame. And the other four Dispossessed. And the crowd.

"And all this time I think," continued Solomon, "that man is not a special being, nor a privileged exception. He is nature itself, whereas in nature the darkness is hidden behind the light, the same as the tear is hidden behind the smile. And you who strive for the beautiful, why do you seek in a face whose inner world is unknown to you? The heart which you carry and which is so sensitive as you say, does it feel? Does it see?"

"It feels, Lord King."

"Has it ever been troubled by eyelids which have been moistened with tears?"

"Yes, my Lord."

"Good. But did it occur to you at that moment that one of the most beautiful things in the world is that inner bond which suddenly has come to light in the trouble of your heart and the welling up in your eyes?"

"No, my Lord."

"No, because you have been carried away by a generalized concept, instead of owning your own concept. The beauty which was to be your calling you sought with your eyes, instead of feeling it with the heart. Why did you ignore the thing which is the very source of the trouble, the finest of beauties? A little while ago you admired me, whereas I abhor myself."

"Spare it, wise Lord."

"And you thought I could be worshipful, not realizing that without this throne, and without this 'wisdom' I am a wicked, selfish and sinful man. I who have a reputation for being just to others am unjust between myself and the others."

And since the crowd and the councillors became uneasy, Solomon raised his voice higher, and addressing himself to his Purser, he asked:

"Am I wealthy?"

"Of course, Lord King," replied the Purser, proudly bowing his head for Solomon's approval.

"And the possessor of piles of gold. Is it not so?"

"We showed it to them, before we brought them to the Temple, Lord King."

"Yes? Good!" He again addressed himself to the hunchback, "I have collected them from the sweat of my subjects. I have oppressed them. Robbed them. I have driven them into battle with the same insatiable passion. And always with the same cupidity, I have built a whole city in the middle of the desert, the City of Thadmor with its high walls. And also the Port of Cassion-Kaber for the mastery of Ophir. For the sake of my glory, I have driven men to work seven years and seven months for the construction of this Temple. And while seeing their blood and tears, I myself never wept. Now tell me, which of the two of us is the beautiful? You, or I? Tell me—he turned to Haman—you who have been an eye witness to my selfishness, why don't you testify?"

"But, Lord King, you have done all this for the sake of the state," the old man gently apologized.

"And I have made the State serve me. Do you see, hunchback, I who have a reputation for being wise, have used my 'wisdom' to shackle the thinking of the others. I have forced them to be mine. I have thought about it, but my will power has been weak before my cupidity. Although straight in body, I have a hunch under my chest, a hunch which has disfigured my heart, the source of real beauty. Give me a heart which knows how to be troubled and I will give you my throne, my staff, my wealth. Just so I shall know how to weep like you. The world is nowhere so beautiful as in a tear drop. But the source of that beauty is the heart. I have only a country. You have a whole inner world. The difference between us is, I have known how to dominate forces outside of me while you have been incapable of dom-

inating your inner strength. Is it not so?"

"Yes, Lord King," replied the four Dispossessed.

The deaf nodded in assent, following the others. But the fool again smiled.

"And now, you speak," Solomon commanded the fourth of the Dispossessed.

"Why have you come here and what do you seek from me?"

And since the man was deaf, the hunchback loudly repeated the King's saying.

And the deaf replied:

"Lord King, my country is near the rising sun, a vast land behind an inaccessible mountain range. Man is a mere atom there, a purposeless being in his own opinion. According to our code, he is the first of intelligent animals. As to what we worship, it is neither beginning nor end. It is indivisible. It is all-powerful, the treasure of the universe. It fills the expanse between heaven and earth, it is heaven and earth itself. It is the soul of the universe. All beings have derived from it and shall return to it. It is the eternity. It is severe like the rivers which emerge from the sides of the mountains, and fierce like the winds. We feed on what we find. What we have is a mere accident, and not a loot. We greet the Sun as the source of the universality. We have neither heavenly longings nor mundane enjoyments. We interpret life but do not aspire to enjoy it. To us, the body is the mere shell of the soul which lives a transitory life, a period of transition striving for nature's fusion into eternity. Language should be the mere medium of expression of the Mind, the only true form of existence and at the same time the only purpose of our earthly life. Whereas I am deaf, incapable of hearing when mind, the philosophizer of the values of our land, hoary and mellowed in wisdom, stands at the public square and expatiates on the mystery of eternal life. Do

you see, Lord King, that I, a voluntary Dispossessed, deprived of all the enjoyments of life, have also been deprived of my hearing, and as a deaf, have been fated to bear the greatest tragedy in life? For that reason, Lord King, I have come to seek your counsel as the lasting comfort to my troubled soul."

And since the man was deaf and could not hear, Solomon the Wise commanded to put into writing on a double scroll what he was about to say, and according to the Israeli law, to be strapped to his left arm as a parchment.

And the King spoke slowly:

"I have heard of the profound philosophies of your land. Not satisfied with their reading, I have brought here to my Temple a few of your philosophers whose minds, you say, you cannot hear. And I have listened to them. I have made them analyze life. I have made them unfold the mystery which we call life, and I have made them speak to me of the magnificent infinity of the constellations, of meditation which is incapable of analyzing itself, of the mystery of the word and the enigma of the soul. And I have listened to them for days and months, myself thinking of their deep philosophizations, thinking, by doing so I shall have explained to me the meaning of my existence. And I, who have been disappointed in enjoyment, glory, power and riches, have thought to define my existence by my wisdom, and to explain it in words, that it is the Elohim. But the eternal 'Why?' and the elusive 'How?', despite the deep philosophies, and perhaps because of them, have made me suffer even more. Finally, desperate, and having resigned the universe, I have concentrated my thoughts on this world. And again I have failed. And you who have come to the 'wise man' to insure the joy of life's philosophy, know this that I have finally tried to analyze this infinitely small atom of the infinitely



vast universe, and again I have failed with all the combined wisdom. Because, in the infinitely small I have seen only the infinitely great. And I have pitied the wisdom of man, thinking we trample each moment what we profess to be the mystery of the universe. You said to me your philosophers speak of the transcendental life. Your desire to listen to them is beautiful. And yet it is illusory and meaningless. Meaningless are all the philosophies, much the same as my 'wisdoms', more than three thousand of which I have put into writing and then I have laughed at them. You deny your existence. Man, under all skies, puts into his worship his willingness to self-denial he has put his own self-worship, because, dictated by his faith in eternal life, he has wished to deny the temporary life. He worships in various countries, both the snake, the sun and Adonis, because in the first's shedding of his skin, the second's daily rising, and the epiphany of the third he sees the mystery of death and the resurrection. Even Moses erected a bronze serpent on a pole. While Aaron who wrote the Pentateuch with Moses, made the Molten Calf. Is this the Mind of Man which you think is the meaning of life, while I consider the wisdom of man the most meaningless thing in the world?"

Solomon ended his word, and when he commanded the fifth of the Dispossessed to be brought before him, the blind man, the lame, the hunchback and the paralytic voiced in unison:

"He is dumb, Lord King. He cannot speak."

"Why then, have you brought him here?" Solomon asked surprised.

"He accompanied us," said the hunchback, "from a populous city which was holding some carnival. We were going through a crowded square. The crowd pressed around him and started to make

fun of him, mimicking all his movements to express himself. The urchins screeched around him and the girls taunted him, reminding him of his impotence, while the young men jostled him jeeringly. There was a moment when the mob around him was so great and so deep was his shock that the dumb, his eyes popping out from anger, his face purple, his hair bristling, his look a flame of indignation, and with outstretched arms he started to cry out loud and long until tears rolled down his cheeks and the crowd around him was instantly petrified. And since the square was instantly deserted we took him along as the silent voice of another human tragedy."

"And you brought him to me to do what?"

"To solicit your wise counsel and your comfort, Lord King."

"And did you think you understood him?"

"Yes, Lord King," said the lame. "What was there so strange about it? The dumb could wish for only one thing, to speak."

"Namely that which you have, is it not so?"

"Exactly, wise Lord," voiced the blind.

"And what you already possess, you say, is enough to express your mind, yes?"

"Of course, Lord King," hastily confirmed the paralytic.

"And also your hearts?"

"Yes, Lord King," again the lame interposed. The others nodded in confirmation.

"Well, well, well," Solomon exclaimed sarcastically. "And you the lame one, and you the hunchback, and you the deaf, the blind and the paralytic, were you ever surrounded by hecklers and mockers and you became angry?"

"Of course, and how often!"

"And you cried out, you protested, did you not?"

"Of course, Lord King."

"And did you succeed in silencing your tormentors, in petrifying them with the ringing intensity of your minds and hearts as did the deaf?"

"No, Lord King," they all were confounded, "in desperation we withdrew from the crowd, trying to hide our imperfections."

"But this dumb man who is deprived of his speech was able fully to express his mind and soul. And he dominated the mob which had tried to impose on him the supremacy of their mockery."

"It is true, Lord King," they all agreed in unison, "truly the Lord of Israel is wise."

"Wise? Me? And why? Because I give expression to thoughts? But you who hear my words, do you know that I have used my tongue in my whole reign to conceal my real thoughts and feelings? Do you see these my councillors, white-haired, experienced and eloquent advisors of my kingdom. They have abused their tongue even against me their king whom they are called upon to advise."

"Lord King, in the name of justice," the councillors were disconcerted while the crowd started to murmur, "you have always been truthful and just."

"Perhaps," Solomon turned to his councillors and again raised his voice, "but not truthful and always just. You, too, have not always been truthful and just. We have talked to one another to understand one another, and we have fooled both ways. Do not be disconcerted. Neither this multitude which has submitted to me and I most always wishes me health and long life so madly, has always been the true exponent of its real thoughts and feelings. But what it has not expressed in words, it has done so by its silence. And in its articulate eulogy I have seen its unuttered discontent of me, their 'wise' king. Oppressive taxes, my squanderings, my dissipations, the accumulation of my riches,—look

into the eyes of this multitude and you will see how deeply they hate me in the same breath while they praise my words which, like theirs, is often false. Or they are displeased and ignore me, even if they agree with me. So do you the Dispossessed. You are displeased and you ignore because, while agreeing with my articulate expressions, inwardly you disagree with me: 'You speak like that because you are not deprived as we are.'"

"It is true, my Lord," shouted the blind automatically. The lame, the deaf, the blind and the paralytic agreed with him.

"Of course," continued Solomon, "it is equally true that I, in turn, inwardly do not agree to be what you have been, despite my protestations. Is this the value of the human word? Aaron was silent when his sons died by the fire of the Lord. But later Aaron sinned. Ahithophel, my father David's counselor, secretly joined the conspiracy against him. I am an Israelite and a king, and my word is a worship addressed to Israel's god Elohim. But to please my pagan wives, right in this Israel's and God's land, I have commanded temples to be erected, in honor of the Phoenician Astarte, the Ammonite Moloch and the Moabite Chamovs, right beside Elohim's temple. Is it not so, Ahimaaz?"—turning to the High Priest.

"Yes, Lord King."

"But you, the High Priest of this land, kept silence. . . . Adonijah, my brother who aided me with his words was conspiring against my throne. Ah, if the being which is called man, in all his life time, could pronounce one word—"Silence". . . . And if he only could be the unspoken life yet vocal. If he could be a cry, a plaint, the unspoken word which is more powerful, more sincere and more expressive! Then such a life would be a season of bliss and not a tragedy. And that unspoken word is

the property of only one among us, the deaf."

And since once again all were agreed, Solomon turned to the sixth and said:

"Tell me, why have you taken the pains of coming as far as here?"

The sixth who was a paralytic and only moved with the aid of the deaf and the hunchback said:

"Lord King, I come from a land whose rule extends from sea to sea and whose emperors have the will to organize armies and to subdue empires. There, man faces the bull, and the mob, watching in the arena the bloody fall of captive men by the sword or the paws of beasts, amuses itself. The javelin and the helmet are inseparable from us. And nothing is so worshipful for us as the strength. The strength which rules, which creates, which moves and which defines life itself. Strength is at once our calling and the meaning of our existence. Whereas I, as you see, Lord King, am a paralytic, powerless to move."

"And you are sorry for that?"

"Of course, wise Lord, for my realization makes my deprivation all the more bitter."

"And you aspire to be strong physically."

"Even to be a conqueror, an emperor like you, Lord King."

"Good. Have you ever heard of Goliath who was strong but who was defeated by David?"

"Yes, my Lord."

"And you who say have intelligence, have you ever asked yourself how David conquered?"

"Never, my Lord."

"It means you have never known another power in life?"

"Another power? What?" the paralytic was surprised.

"The spiritual, the moral power which is superior to the physical and more dom-

inant, more creative, more dynamic. You have come from a long distance, and you have made the journey easily."

"O no, Lord King. The journey was so hard and so impossible for me. I was tormented on the backs of my companions."

"But you came, just the same, did you not?"

"As you see, my Lord."

"And with the intelligence you possess, do you see what power it was that brought you as far as here? The power which, like you, brought your six companions — the blind with his gropings, the lame with his limpings, the hunchback with his pantings? Was it the physical power? The power which strikes down the bull in your land, as you say, which keeps the javelin and the helmet inseparable, or subdues kingdoms? What brought you here was your desire to remove your defect, your faith, the power of your soul. Is it not so?"

"Yes, Lord King."

"Do you understand now what was the power that enabled David to overcome Goliath?"

"Yes, wise Lord."

"You said you could, or wished to be an emperor. It means then that the emperor of your land is strong. Yes?"

"Yes, my Lord."

"He is strong physically. But could he come with you as far as here without his army, I mean without his faith, without that spiritual force?"

"I doubt it, Lord King."

"But that army of yours which is made up of hundreds of thousands of the healthy and strong braves of your land, do you think that army could have come without that emperor and without that empire, without that inner powerful desire which is inborn and which we call racial domination? And whence comes, in your opinion, that indescribable power which drives the soldiers to an enthusiastic affection toward

their king who leads them into death, despite their strong bodies and their exclusive right to live? Whereas you, although paralytic, have a powerful lust for life, seeing it in strength. It comes from their spirits. Is it not so?"

"Yes, Lord King."

"Do you have that spirit, the spirit of David, to conquer life, to sally against it which, like Goliath, you find so formidable against you? And you who complain because of your physical handicap, which of the two would you like to be, David, or Goliath."

"David, Lord King."

"Then why have you come as far as here, my son, when you already have a strong enough mind and a soul which is capable of being strong and faithful? Put a sword, a javelin and a helmet on that soul of yours and make it a king inside you. And if you can infect physically strong soldiers with your kingly spirit, you will become merged with the victorious army of your land, thus giving your life a meaning. That will be your victory over life which, you think, has defeated you. Am I telling you the truth?"

"It is true, true true," suddenly a voice rose, followed by a mad laughter.

The crowd began to laugh. The councillors made uneasy movements, and the lame, in the ensuing confusion, raised his voice and said loudly:

"He is a fool, Lord King. His talk is meaningless and aimless. Throughout the length of the journey he was babbling such jargon."

"Fool? Fool? I a fool?" cackled the man who was a fool, the seventh of the Dispossessed.

And when Solomon the Wise tried to silence him, the fool turned to him and shouted in his face:

"You shut up. I am the king," and he again chuckled loudly.

The entire assembly hall fell into gusts of laughter. One of the guards wanted to fall upon him and restrain him but Solomon stopped him. He became serious for a moment then smiled with that wise and at once bitter smile, then turning to the fool, he asked:

"Do you know what care is?"

"Care?" The fool was surprised. "Care and the hare, the hare chased the bear, Bingo."

And the crowd again burst into laughter. "What are you thinking now?" asked Solomon the Wise.

"My chests of gold, I brought not them in, brought not them in, brought not them in."

"Tell me, my son," Solomon's smile broadened, "have you ever been afraid of death?"

"One, two, three, one, two, three, death he sayeth."

Solomon the Wise was again obliged to quiet the assembly which could hardly restrain itself. Meanwhile the fool, waving his arms, swooped off and stood before the High Priest, patted his Ephod, and glaring at him, asked:

"What all do you hide under all this, Huh?"

Then, with the same agility, he sprang to the side of Solomon's throne, snatched the crown from his head and put it on his own head.

The Six Dispossessed were astounded. The Councillors became angry. The crowd started to clamor and some sprang up to haul him down, but Solomon the Wise stood up, with a fierce look silenced the crowd, silently scanned his surrounding, shook his head wisely, and said to all:

"Let him speak, and observe his blissful unconsciousness. He knows neither king, nor privation, nor grief, nor fully understands the concept of death. Let him scorn and even mock us. We are worthy of that

mockery because, through the strength of our thinking, we seek outside of us the thing which we consider the meaning of life and which we call happiness. Whereas happiness is hidden in ourselves, in the back of our consciousness. Man is unfortunate not because of his misfortunes, but because of his consciousness of those misfortunes. Our misfortune is our consciousness itself. Stop expounding and you, too, shall be happy. I found life vain because I sought something in it. What? I myself don't know. But something which would fill my being and would be the answer to my searching mind. And I found it not. Look at him. So care free, so serene and so blissful. Is he not happy?"

"Yes, Lord King," the five Dispossessed hastened to reply, while the dumb merely nodded his head, "he is the only happy one among men."

The Councillors and the crowd agreed with the Dispossessed.

Then Solomon, with a playful smile, asked each of the Dispossessed if he "wanted to be a fool."

But the blind man preferred to remain blind, the lame a lame, the deaf a deaf and the paralytic a paralytic. The dumb merely let out a cry of scorn.

Solomon the Wise then turned to his Councillors and asked the same question, but none of them wanted to be a fool. The King of Israel received the same answer from the crowd.

Finally he turned to the fool and asked: "Do you want to be a fool?"

But the fool became angry, firmly planted the crown on the King's head, looked at him, cackled, stuck a finger at the crown and shouted in his face:

"You are the fool."

And Solomon the Wise, who was the wisest of the wise, reflected only then that he really had asked a very foolish question.



# ON THE ORIGINS OF THE ARMENIANS

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To this day the question of the origin of the Armenians lacks a complete explanation. This is explained, first, by the fact that the invention of the Armenian alphabet took place comparatively late after the birth of Christ, precisely in the beginning of the Fifth Century, approximately one thousand years after the event which interests us, and secondly, because the first Armenian chroniclers relied mostly on foreign sources which were deficient, or on traditions which had been transmitted by word of mouth from generation to generation, which, as historical sources, like wise were incomplete.

The first Armenian chroniclers, Agathangelos, Faustus of Byzantium, Moses of Khorene (Khorenatzi), Hovhannes Catholikos, and even before him, Gregory the Illuminator, founder of the Armenian Church, in one of his encyclicals translated from the Greek, ascribe to the Armenian people a "Torkomian" (Togarmah) origin. According to Armenian classical authors, at the beginning of their history, the Armenians belonged wholly to the "House of Togarmah". Although Moses of Khorene, in his turn, gives a different explanation, yet, indirectly, he accepts the Ashchenazian origin, claiming that the Armenians were the progeny of Haik who, after his victory over Belus, the Assyrian despot, settled in

one of the provinces of the Armenian highland and founded the Armenian, otherwise known as the "Haikazoun" (Haikazian) nation. According to Khorenatzi (Moses of Khorene), Haik was the son of Togarmah. It is interesting to note here that this succession is also confirmed by Georgian tradition. Khorenatzi, however, is not explicit as to how the Armenians can claim Ashchenazian origin.

Until 60 years ago the origin of the Armenians was conceived literally in terms of the tradition left behind by the classical historians of the Togarmah or Ashchenazian school. It was then that, the history of the Old East was projected in a completely new light as a result of the successive restorations of the Assyro-Babylonian, Persian and Urartuan inscriptions. It was these inscriptions which brought to light at the time the serious defects of the traditional interpretation. As a matter of fact, these inscriptions revealed the names of many ancient peoples which had been completely ignored by the traditional historians, while on the other hand very few of Armenian traditional national heroes were mentioned. As a result of these twin omissions, there emerged a powerful anti-traditionalist school which simply rejected especially the veracity of the writings of Khorenatzi, posing as a purely objective,

scientific movement with a new theory of historical criticism.

At the beginning of the century there evolved the bi-elemental theory of Armenian origin which insisted that the Armenian nation was the merger of twin racial elements— the native Urartuans and the immigrant element, a branch of the Phrygian tribe. It was also supposed that the merger took place in the Seventh Century B.C. as a direct result of the Scythian invasion.

The above-mentioned theory took account of both the Greek sources and the information of the inscriptions, nevertheless it, too, had its serious imperfections. In the first place, it completely ignored the Armenian national traditions, and secondly, it failed to offer the true cause of the duality of the Armenian nation. Why do the Armenians call themselves Hai, or Haier, while all other peoples called them Armenians? There were many attempts to resolve the matter, giving rise to a series of contradictory theories. First, it was supposed that the name of the newcomer Phrygians was both "Hai" and "Armen", then it was claimed that the newcomers called themselves Hai, while the aborigines of Armenia were the Armens, the reverse was another theory, and lastly, it was claimed that both nomenclatures were endemic, *ad infinitum*.

To all these should be added other theories which ascribed the chief role hitherto considered as secondary factors, tracing the Armenians to the Scythians, the Cimmerians, the Minni (Mannaians), the Hatti (Hittites) and the Hyksos (of Egypt). All these were found in the research studies on the origins of the Armenian people.

To show how many of these theories were established, the case of the Minni is typical. Minni was a small country to the north of Persia, in the region of Khoy-Maku, the name of which was often re-

peated in Assyrian and Urartuan inscriptions. The word Armen was dissected into "Air Manna," which in the Armenian language means "man of Manna or Minni", meaning a native of Minni. The conclusion was, the Armenians were the natives, and consequently, the newcomers from Phrygia were the Hais, Haier, or the Haiks.

Finally, after the deciphering of the Hittite inscriptions in 1926, the highly curious fact came to light that fifteen centuries before Christ, Higher Armenia, namely the northwestern part of the Armenian highland, was called "the land of Hiasha". This naturally gave rise to the latest theory which identifies the Armenians with the inhabitants of Hiasha.

Today the question of the origin of the Armenians is thus cramped, making it one of the most difficult problems of the history of the ancient East to solve. Despite apparently insurmountable hardships, let us try to reconstruct the problem from what we already know and what may be considered more or less established by the scientists. In short, based on the present day development of historical, philological and anthropological sciences, let us attempt to construct the most probable theory of the origin of the Armenians, keeping in mind the while, without deviating in the slightest from historical objectivity, the testimony of the Armenian traditionalists. Indeed, the tradition *per se* is nothing but the oral transmission of a notable historic event. It may lose its original simplicity through the attrition of the ages, and even may acquire accretions, without, however, ceasing to be the commemoration of a great historical development. We must analyze, "understand" the traditions and extract from them all that which may be considered as historical.

The first period of the history of the Armenian people, which may be called the ancient or prehistoric era, is in turn di-

vided into two parts. These are the pre-Urartuan period during which there can be no talk of the real existence of the Armenian people but only of its component parts, and the Urartuan period which marks the real beginnings of the people.

## I

### THE PRE-URARTUAN PERIOD

#### The Ethnographical Map of the Armenian Plateau

In reconstructing the original period of the history of the ancient East, there is no more direct and accurate method than the study of the inscriptions, the greater part of which may be read and understood today, thanks to the arduous efforts of countless philologists. The peoples of the ancient east who lived in Mesopotamia, in Egypt and central Anatolia are quite well known to us today as far back as 3-4000 years before Christ. We know the names of these peoples, the ancient names of their countries, their geographical positions, the names of their kings and gods, the principal events of their histories. We have a fairly good idea of their customs and mores, even their jurisprudence has come down to us through many judicial and instructive tablets.

The information of this category at our disposal, pertaining to the peoples of the Armenian plateau, came into existence much later, in the middle of the Ninth Century B.C., as a result of the founding of the Urartuan Kingdom. To reconstruct the original history of this continent, however, we are forced to resort to indirect media, namely to benefit from those parts of the inscriptions of neighboring countries which pertain to the Armenian highland and adjoining territories. In other words, the ethnographical index of those countries, and note the evolutionary changes during the centuries.

The first recorded information about the

inhabitants of the Armenian plateau have come down to us from 1800 B.C. Up until that time the plateau was inhabited chiefly by the aborigines. We find the first Indo-European elements during the third and fourth millennia, settling first on the highlands of Iran and Asia Minor, and then steadily advancing during the 19th and 18th centuries into the Armenian plateau. The newcomer Indo-Europeans did not exterminate the natives, on the contrary they added and superimposed on their numbers. In forming the pre-Urartuan ethnographical map, therefore, we encounter the following racial elements: the aborigines, the newcomers, and their various mergers.

#### The Aborigines

Ethnographically these were neither Aryans nor Semites, but should be classified as white or European, or some subdivision of that family, a claim which is easily demonstrable. Indeed, if from the present day population of the Middle East, Armenia and the Caucasus, we imaginatively separate all those elements from whose anthropological attributes we can surely conclude that they are of non-local origin, such as the Mongolian and northern types, we shall see that all the rest of the peoples—Armenians, Kurds, Georgians, the Lazes and even the Turks—have one basic, common, ethnological quality. That basic stratum which constitutes sometimes more than 50 percent of the given population, irrefutably belongs to the European type.

During the course of this study we shall have further occasion to revert to this topic, suffice it to establish at this time that these native populations did not include a single Semite element. Anciently, the Assyrian State—essentially Semitic—succeeded only once, and that for only a brief period, to set foot on a small segment of the Armenian plateau. This happened

in the region of Malatia of the future Armenia Minor circa 712-634 B.C. In such a brief period — altogether 72 years—which was cluttered with countless revolts, even according to Assyrian inscriptions, it is impossible that any racial merger could have taken place.

From the cultural standpoint, the aborigines of the region clearly differed from their immediate neighbors, the Assyrian culture for example, and approximated far more the cultures of Elam and Sumer developing in the south. From the linguistic standpoint, too, the natives spoke such languages which belonged neither to the Indo-European nor Semetic families, but were entirely unique.

Often there have been attempts to classify the natives under any category, giving them a common name. Based upon racial characteristics, the anthropologists have proposed the following names: Caucasian, Taurusian, Armenoid, Asia Minoroid etc. The philologists, on the other hand, proposed the names Japhetic (Prof. Marr's suggestion), and Alarotian, the latter derived from the name of the people which inhabited the Plain of Ararat which, perhaps, was the Greek form for Urartu.

Seeing, however, that none of these names fully corresponds to the reality, we will suggest the compound word Armeno-Caucasian (the word Armenian here being used in its geographical sense) which specifies, more than the others, that part of the land where this particular race lived, as well as their language.

Of the ancient peoples of the East, and as more or less kinsmen of the Armeno-Caucasians, mention can be made only of the pre-Hittites, the Elamites and the Sumerians. From the philological standpoint in particular, all these peoples had a common trait. None of them spoke either the Aryan or the Semitic languages. Ethnologically they had a common denomi-

nator; they all were brachycephalous or included substantial elements of the type.

We have already noted that in prehistoric times the people which inhabited the Armenian plateau has left countless traces of its culture—stone structures and hieroglyphics. Excavations have proved that those inhabitants were dolichocephalous who became extinct toward the beginnings of the third millenium B.C. These dolichocephalous aborigines were slowly replaced by the Armeno-Caucasian brachycephalous race. The scientists are not yet in a position to tell us whether this pre-Armenian prototypes came from elsewhere or, on the contrary, came into existence on the spot. At all events, when the first Indo-European invasions took place, the sole inhabitants of the land were men of the Armeno-Caucasian type, justifying our contention that they were the true aborigines.

## II

### The Indo-Europeans

The idea of the initial union of the Indo-European or Aryan peoples is derived from the study of languages. These languages, spoken in almost the whole of Europe and south-western Asia, all the way from the Atlantic to the Indian oceans, had the same common basis in point of grammar and vocabulary. To define that great language family the term Indo-European has been accepted everywhere, signifying that segment of the globe where these languages dominate.

The Indo-European languages are divided into two main branches which include approximately twelve language groups. These are: the eastern branch embracing the Indo-European languages (Sanskrit and Indian) and the Iranian languages (Persian, Zendi, Kurdish, Oesdi, etc.); and the Western branch which includes practically the whole of the European languages, especially the Greek,

Latin, German and Slavic groups.

How did this world wide extension of the Indo-European languages come about is a question which has long since busied the philologists and the historians. In view of the internal basic identity of all these dialects, the question was finally resolved by the hypothesis that these separate peoples who spoke a common language were originally a united people. The following universally admitted theory is based on this sole interpretation.

Long ago, probably 5-6 millennia before, on a spot in the north of the Europa-Asian continent, there lived peoples which were closely related to one another ethnologically, all of whom spoke the same language even if in the form of dialects. That was the first Indo-European language which was reconstructed theoretically. For certain reasons—general freezing or other atmospheric changes—these peoples abandoned their ancestral homes and migrated to other countries. At the beginning they were divided into two great groups. The first group migrated to the south, and crossing the Caspian Sea to the east, they spread out and settled on the area between the Armenian Plateau as far as India, forming the Indo-European Eastern branch, while the second group, moving farther to the north, spread from the Pacific to the region of the Urals, thus forming the Indo-European Western branch.

The above-mentioned theory is not wholly hypothetical; it has been partly established by irrefutable documents. Thus, the migration of the eastern branch has been described in a book called "Avesta", written in the Zend language and dedicated to the ancient religion of Mazdaism, a work which, in point of its contents, may be compared to the Old Testament. In Avesta, the Indo-European peoples who had taken part in the eastern migration are designated by the name of

"Aryan", but that name today has been generalized to include not only the eastern migrants but the entire Indo-European family.

Before their dispersion the Indo-Europeans had attained a certain cultural level, a fact which was recovered by the following very wise reasoning. By a comparison of all the Aryan languages it was noticed that certain words coincided while others did not. In other words the philologists separated all the words which signified the same thing, were identical, or had the same word root in all the Indo-European languages. The totality of these words naturally gave the picture of the Aryans' initial culture. The primitive life of these peoples may be represented as follows. They kept large or small flocks, were familiar with the horse, had carts and yokes, knew how to mould metals but not iron, armed themselves with the javelin, bow and arrow, they were a sedentary people, lived in solid houses, and their victuals consisted of various foods made of grain, milk and meat. From the standpoint of social structure, the Aryans were organized into large patriarchal families, accepted the supremacy of one king, and believed in the existence of one god. Lastly, they divided the year on the revolutions of the moon and maintained the decimal system of arithmetic. In short, theirs was a pastoral civilization, far more advanced than the Nimrodian, yet much behind the sedentary. The pre-Armenian peoples living on the Armenian Plateau had a sedentary civilization.

Expanding over Europe and the northern parts of eastern Asia and India, the Aryans succeeded in subjugating the local peoples, aided chiefly by the utilization of the horse and the war chariot. Almost everywhere the newcomers formed the leading element in occupied countries—the nobility, the military and the clergy.



The result of the expansion of the Indo-Europeans was the simultaneous extension of their language as well as the racial merger of the conquerors and the conquered. The old mankind was radically transformed, physically and spiritually. There came into existence a number of new peoples who, by virtue of their geographic and historical attributes, became more or less linked with the original Aryan peoples. Quite understandably, in similar circumstances, the Aryan languages developed along centrifugal lines, preserving the while the same grammatical structure, and yet enriched by the borrowing of countless words from the vocabulary of the natives.

This is the theory of the origin of the Aryan peoples. As seen, it is based chiefly on philological analyses, and by the same token it does not broach the racial question, an important question whose answer is not given, whether all these Aryan peoples belong to the same race or the opposite? The Aryan concept is purely philological having no relation whatsoever to racial questions. Is there really an Aryan race, or is it merely a supposition?

In our personal opinion, as far as the past is concerned, the answer is in the affirmative. At the very beginning of their history when the Indo-European peoples had not yet broken up, if not all of them, at least the greater part really belonged to the same human family. It is difficult to give an accurate description of this race, in our opinion its most important characteristic was its being dolichocephalous. The first Aryans had long heads, or long skulls, and consequently long faces. This description fits the northerners—the Scandinavians, northern Germans, etc.; the Mediterraneans — southern Italians, the Spanish, the Greeks, etc etc.; the Persians and the Indians, etc. etc. Based on the fact that the original Aryans inhabited the northern part of the Europa-Asian conti-

nent, we may suppose that they were blonds in complexion and color of hair and eyes. It was only later that the Indo-Europeans who migrated to the south, due to the effect of the sun, gradually acquired the dark complexion.

A correction here is in order. From the ethnological standpoint, the first waves of the Aryan invasion did not correspond to the greater part of these peoples. Especially the Alpine tribes — the Gauls, the Britons and the Irish—who are considered the first settlers in Europe, by their anthropological characteristics palpably differed from the later newcomer Aryans. Their chief characteristic was their salient brachycephalousness. To prevent confusion with the natives, we must call this first Indo-European wave as the "pre-Aryans."

As a result of their initial admixture with the natives the original Aryans sustained considerable physical changes. A striking example of this are the Slavic peoples who, under the influence of the Mongols of Asia, acquired the short head, short and round faces, flat noses and often slightly almond-shaped eyes. We shall have more to say on the mixture of the races later on.

### III

#### The First Wave of the Indo-European Invasions in the Near East

As we have already stated, the first Aryans who invaded the Near East belonged to the eastern branch of that race. The vanguard of this wave were the Medes who settled in northern Iran, probably 2,200-2,400 B.C. These were soon followed by the Cassites who settled in Babylonia about 1888 B.C. where they founded a dynasty which lasted several centuries. It was the Cassites who brought the horse to the Near East as a tamed animal.

To the north of Babylonia as far as the

Taurus range, beginning with 1750 we find the Khurri, often called the Harri, and their neighbors and linguistic kinsmen the Mitanni. These two peoples were closely related to the Medes and even identified with them. The philological affinity between Mitanni and Medes is too obvious.

The language of the Khurris and the Mitannis is too familiar to us, thanks to countless recorded tablets. These are not Indo-European languages but are native, nevertheless there is no doubt that these two peoples included powerful Aryan strains which, as always, constituted their nobility, the military and the clergy. Indeed, their kings bear Indo-European names, likewise various parts of the armor of their horses, and finally, their gods were none other than Mithra, Indra and Varuna, the Indo-Aryan trinity.

Based upon the similarity of the names "Hurri" and "Hai", in recent years there have been attempts to identify these two peoples. It must be stated, however, that these attempts are not very convincing. It does not seem likely that at any time in the past the Armenians may have worshipped Indian gods, an exclusion which rejects the theory of identity of the two peoples. It is far more interesting to explore the extent of the expansion of the eastern Aryans in the direction of the north.

The oldest Armenian province bears the name of "Hark", according to Khorenatzi, Haig himself being the founder. In classical Armenian literature the names of all countries are framed in the same manner: Virk, Mark, Qougark, Taik, etc., meaning, the Virs, the Mars (Medes), the Qougars, the Taiyis. The name "Hark", therefore, must be understood as meaning "the land of the Harris." The expression proves that the Harris, or the Harrs, had crossed the Taurus range and had settled in the plain of Aradzani, the Province of Hark.

Lastly, as we see in sketching the history

of Urartu, King Rousas I in the 8th century B.C. occupied the land of "Ritwani", the area between modern mountainous Armenia and the basin of Lake Sevan in the south. Analyzed in the Urartuan language, the name of that country is land of Ritou. In our opinion the word Ritou stems from a root word which corresponds to the ancient Persian word Rot" which means a river or stream, thus meaning "Land of the River". In the classical Armenian geography there are six provinces which are framed by the same root word. These are: Aghuantrot, Djaushrot, Aranrot, Rotbatzian, Roti-Raga and Baghanrot, all of which are found along the Yeraskh River, in the interior part of that river, namely the geographical position of ancient Rituan. Since the above mentioned name stems from an expression of eastern Aryans, it must be concluded therefore that the Aryans were settled in that land; and, according to Leo, these Median people had spread as far as Mount Arakadz.

In conclusion, the Indo-Aryans who were the first to enter the Near East, were also the first who set foot on the Armenian Plateau, occupying its southern and southeastern frontiers.

### The Western Aryans

In the 18th century before Christ the pre-Hittite state in central Anatolia collapsed and its place was taken by the great Hittite empire. The Hittites have left behind many inscriptions, written in one language the words of which are not Indo-European whereas the grammar belongs to the Aryan western branch. The Hittites expanded more or less to the south as far as Syria and Mesopotamia. In the east they never crossed the banks of the Euphrates.

Other invasions took place in the 18th century; Egypt was occupied by the Hyksos who founded the dynasties of the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries, and, after

approximately three centuries of domination, were expelled from the land. There have been attempts to identify the name "Hyksos" with "Haik"—a theory in which we cannot delve long—and it is generally admitted that these invaders were Aryans and even northerners.

When the Hittites started to expand to the east, about 1500 B.C. they came in contact with a land to the north of the Armenian Plateau which was called "Hiasha". The suffix "asha" of this word should be understood to mean "land" or "country"—the linguistic equivalent of the Indo-Aryan suffix "Astan" which, likewise, means land (Hai, Hiastan, Kazak, Kazakhstan, Afghan, Afghanistan, etc.). Hiasha, thus, means land of the Hais or the Armenians. The Armenians call their country Haiastan. Thanks to these Hittite inscriptions, it was possible to arrive at the highly significant conclusion that, as early as 15 centuries before Christ, the word "Hai" already existed on the Armenian Plateau. It should be added here, that, judging from the topographical and ethnographical names, the inhabitants of this land may well be classified among the western Aryans.

#### **The Ethnographical Index of 18-15 Centuries, B.C.**

After the first Aryan invasions the ethnographical image of the Armenian Plateau presented the following picture. The native population had been reinforced by the newcomer Aryans, the Indo-Aryans having settled in the southern part, while the Indo-Europeans in the northern part, a unique situation never before seen in the history of mankind, in that, the two main-streams of the Aryan race had converged on the Armenian Plateau. The Hiashas of the north and the Khurris of the south did not stand still. In the ensuing clash the northerners were the victors, and these, united with newcomers, drove out the

Indo-Aryans from the Plateau bit by bit.

#### **IV**

#### **The Second Wave of Aryan Invasions In the Near East**

##### **The Muschki; Who They Were?**

The second wave of foreign invasions on the Armenian highland took place in the 12th century before Christ, and yet, as early as the 14th century we find traces of its presence in the west of the plateau. A narrative poem from the time of Ramses II of Egypt—1330-1270—which is known as "The Poem of Bendower" gives the list of all the peoples which took part in the campaign against Egypt: the Missians, the Karrians, the Lycians and the Hittites, including the "Muschki" (Muschians). Later, we encounter this name in Assyrian inscriptions. Tiglath-Pileser I, (1108-1080), relates that, before his reign, probably in 1158 B.C., five kings of the Muschki had invaded the south and had occupied the Aghtznik—south of the central part of the Taurus chain—, however, he had defeated and subjugated them. In Urartuan inscriptions this people are called "Mussas." Through a synthesis of these various inscriptions we can be fairly certain that the native land of the Muschki was in Cappadocia, also called Armenia Minor. Its capital Mazaka, called Mazhak by the Armenians, was located near the modern City of Caesarea.

Finally, we again meet this people in later sources. In the Old Testament it is called "Mosoch", with Khorenatzi the word is converted into "Mushach" (Mushak), the Satrap of Armenia Minor appointed by Aram the Patriarch who gave his name to the above-mentioned City of Mazhak.

The advent of the Muschki on the Armenian highland, therefore, took place during the 12th century before Christ. Based upon a study of the topographical names of the plateau, it may be asserted

that a real invasion took place as a result of which many provinces were occupied by the invaders. We can even determine that the Muschki advanced along two main lines:

a) In the direction of south-west. Indeed, in the southern part of the plateau we find the following interesting names: the City of Mouch, the City and province of Moks to the south of Lake Van—the latter name appearing even from the beginning of the Urartuan period in the form of "Mutzatzir".

b) To the west and north-west. A close examination of an ancient map shows the Mochs (Moks) Mountains to the north of Erzeroum and the ancient Georgian Province of "Mutzkhet" which, according to the Georgian tradition, was found by Mutzkhetos, elder son of Cartlos, the brother of Haik.

Who were these Muschki? What other people can we identify them with? First it should be noted that the reference firmly belongs to a people which came from the outside of the Near East. We know from ancient chroniclers that eastern shores of the Caspian Sea was inhabited by the Masakets. In Armenian classical literature this people are called the Mazkuts. The scholars of both Greek and Armenian chroniclers have represented them as a Scythian people. Being a strain of that great people, the Muschki spread out far to the north and gave their name to the city of Moscow.

The Muschki entered Asia Minor following probably the Balkan peninsula-Anatolian plateau route. Indeed, one province of Phrygia bears the Mochsoyen, namely, the province of the Mochsi, proving that the Muschki passed through these regions and even settled there for a time.

The Scythian invasions began, as we see, in the latter part of the 7th century B.C., while the Muschki appeared in Asia Minor

as early as the 14th century. This observation enables us to press the view that the Muschki should be considered the remote advance guard of the Scythians, in other words, while a member of the Scythian family of peoples, the Muschki might have differed ethnologically from the real Scythians, a point to which we will revert later on.

### The Emergence of the Name "Torkom" (Togarmah)

The name "Torcom" seems to be closely associated with the Muschi. We first meet the name "Togarmah" in Hittite inscriptions of the 17th century B.C. Then, in the 14th century the name assumes the form of "Togarmah" denoting a country and a city to the north-east of the Cilician Taurus range. Later, in Hittite, Assyrian and Urartuan inscriptions we meet many times the root word "Tark". The striking thing is that many words built on this root word signify not only lands (Togarmah), but also cities (Turkayas, Tarkikamas, Tilikarimu), and persons (Tarkutimeh), and gods (Tarkhunza), all of which are found in the north-eastern part of the Cilician Taurus range, namely, precisely where the inscriptions locate the land of the Muschki.

Today, the generally accepted view is, that the root word "Tark" signifies, not a people, but a prehistoric god of Cilicia who was called "Tarku". All words stemming from this root word are names of gods, such as Christopher, Christiania, Christaburg, Christobal and other contemporary names.

This theory is confirmed by an observation of Professor Khachatourian of the University of Erivan pertaining to a legendary person of Herculean strength named "Tork Ankeghya", (Tork of Ankegh). The Professor explains that the word Tork is the name of an ancient god while Ankegh is an ancient Armenian city, the modern

Ekil between Diarbekir and Kharpoot. "Tork Ankeghya", therefore, must be understood to mean "The God Tork of the City of Ankegh".

The name "Tarku" is also found outside of the Near East. In Asia we find the Turkmen and Turk peoples, in northern Caucasus, the Terek River, in Italy, the old Etruscan origin, and finally, the noble tribe of the Tarquins, likewise of Etruscan origin, and finally, in southern France, the City of Taraskon where, to this day, the traditions of a dragon called "Tarask" are still alive, perhaps the last living memory of the god Tarku.

By collating these several observations, we venture the conclusion that the Torkomian tradition or the Torkomian origin of the Armenians should be interpreted to mean that, at one time, a constituent segment of the Armenian people were among the ranks of the idolators of the god Tarku. It now remains to be answered, to what creative elements of the Armenian people did the Torkomians belong? Without lingering long on this point, we venture the opinion that they were the Muschki, the worshippers of Tarku.

## V

### The Second Wave of Aryan Expansion The Phrygians

After the Muschki, other Aryan peoples invaded the Armenian highland. These were the Phrygians and other kinsmen—the Arimayis and the Ashchenazians whose entry into the highland took place between 8th and 9th centuries, B.C. These migrations will be taken up in our study of the Urartuans because their influence became felt only during the last years of the Urartuans.

## CHAPTER II

### The Urartuan Period

The 17th century B.C. marked the be-

ginning of the rise of the Assyrian empire. Expanding to the north, the Assyrians overthrew the Mitanni and Khurri kingdom, and having reached the southern sphere of the Taurus range of mountains in the 13th century, they already were engaging the little principalities of the region. In the inscription, the southern part of the Taurus range is called "Nairi" which in the Assyrian language means "Land of the rivers".

Before launching on the history of Urartu attention should be focussed on the following two observations.

a) At the outset of its founding, Urartu already covered quite an extensive area, comprising the territory between modern Van-Mouch-Erzeroum cities. Its first capital, according to the inscriptions, was "Ardsasku" which is identical with the ancient Armenian city of "Ardsn" on the Upper Yearskh (Arax) River. This northern site of the first capital of Urartu is significant, enabling us to conclude that the royal family estates were located in the northern part of the Armenian Plateau, adjoining the frontier of Upper Armenia where, according to the Hittite inscriptions, the land of Haiasha was located.

b) The Urartuan language indisputably is a local language which is classified among the family of Japhetic languages. Yet, it reveals a unique characteristic, in that, a palpable segment of its vocabulary is made of Indo-European root words which have a remarkable resemblance to the forms of the western branch of that family. It appears that the natives were long in contact with the Europa-Aryan peoples from whom they borrowed many words. It should be noted here that the borrowed vocabulary did not stem from the Hittites but were drawn chiefly from peoples of farther west—the Phrygians, the Karians, the Lycians and the Greeks—in the western part of Asia Minor.

From these two observations we con-



clude that the Urartuans, contrary to the generally accepted false opinion, ethnologically, were not pure-blooded, but even at the outset of their history they included elements of western races.

### **The History of Urartu**

The history of Urartu is divided into four main periods: The founding of the kingdom, the period of expansion, the period of stabilization, and the period of decline and fall.

#### **The Period of Founding, 860-820**

In 860 B.C. a prince of the Armenian highland, Aramis, succeeded in subjugating a number of small local princes and creating a kingdom, thus becoming the great antagonist of the Assyrian king Shalmanesser II, 860-825. The latter naturally tried to wipe off the newly-created Kingdom and to this end attacked it a number of times. In the Assyrian inscriptions the country of Aramis is designated by the name of "Urartu" probably meaning "High Mountains".

The first invasion of Shalmanesser took place in 857, in which, although the Assyrian king traversed the whole length of the land, laid siege and captured the capital city of Ardsasku, in the end he was obliged to return to his land without having fully vanquished Aramis. Indeed, Shalmanesser again attacked Aramis in 845, but again he failed to conquer his antagonist.

Aramis was succeeded by his son Lu-gikris (843-835), and then by Sarituris I (835-820). The latter started his reign by repulsing a third invasion of Shalmanesser in 833. Soon after (829) Shalmanesser again attacked Urartu for the fourth time, trying this time via the Mutsatsir (the City of Moks to the south of Lake Van), but again was repulsed. Thanks to these successes, Sarituris was enabled to move his capital farther to the south. About 828 B.C. he built the famous stone fortifications of the City of Van, leaving behind, although

in Assyrian language, the first Armenian national inscription.

### **The Period of Expansion**

(820-743)

Firmly established, thanks to the successful resistance of its first three kings, Urartu now launched on to its period of rise. Ispuinis (820-800), the successor of Sarituris, repelled the invasion of the Assyrian king Shamsiraman IV. Beginning with about 805, he made his son Menuas I the co-occupant of the throne. The latter, in the name of his father, made a great raid of the mountains of Kurdistan and was the first Urartuan king who set foot on the Araratian plain. He founded a city after his name at the northern skirts of Mount Masis.

Menuas I became sole ruler (800-780) and probably at the outset of his reign he launched a campaign of imperialism in all directions, greatly extending his frontiers in the direction of south-west.

In his time Urartu became as strong a power as Assyria.

During the reign of Arkistris I the Urartuan kingdom reached the pinnacle of its development. Arkistis made several raids on Assyria, defeated the armies of Shalmanasser, then penetrating the Militirch, he expanded the boundaries of his kingdom from the Caspian Sea to Cappadocea.

Sarituris II, in a series of wars against Assyria, wrested a number of small principalities and annexed them to his kingdom. He was, however, defeated in his last drive, at the famous battle of Kummuschi.

In the reign of King Roussas I, Urartu was invaded from the north by the Sythians and the Cimmerians who, first occupying the Caucasus, finally brought about the downfall of Urartu. With the invasion of the Aryan Armens in the 7th century, and

the perpetual Assyrian inroads, Urartu finally succumbed and gradually gave way to the domination of the Armenians.

### The Period of Stabilization

(743-675)

From the Battle of Arbat to the outbreak of the Scythian invasions we find the powers of Urartu and Assyria in a state of balance, both powers stubbornly competing over the possession of Manna, the country located between the basins of the Tigris and Arax Rivers, a region which, due to its unique geographical position, has become a bone of contention.

Sarduris' (Sarituris) successor Roussas I (730-714) was at constant war with his great antagonist King Sargon and met with a tragic death. After a great defeat, to avoid falling captive to Sargon, he committed suicide, an event in regard to which the Assyrian king boasts at some length.

At the beginning of his reign Roussas continued the work of expansion, completing the occupation of the southern part of the Sevan basin, penetrating the mountain range of Caucasia Minor, and subjugating 19 petty kings of Rituan, the region between Lake Sevan as far as the interior of the Arax River.

Arkistis II (711-685) was the last great king of Urartu. He did not personally wage war against the Assyrians but confined himself to instigating against Assyria her western neighbors. From Assyrian inscription we learn that, in the days of Arkistis, Urartu and Assyria started to develop diplomatic relations, caused mainly by the Scythian menace. The Scythians and their various allies, as old political enemies, made the two countries forget their former rivalries.

Arkistis II was succeeded by Roussas II (685-675), only one inscription being left by him, now at the library of Etchmiadzin.

### The Period of the Downfall) (675-580)

The simultaneous downfall of the Urartuan and Assyrian kingdoms was the direct result of the Scythian invasion. The Scythian invasions were the joint raids of the Schoks (real name of Scythians) and the Cimmerians, the latter probably unrelated to the Scythians ethnologically. The first invasions took place in the reign of Sennacherib (705-682) and were stopped by Ashurhaddi the Second (682-675). These were joint invasions by the Cimmerians and the Schoks. Those who were repulsed settled in the Plain of Kura and the eastern skirts of the highland. The Schoks, in particular, founded two provinces. Their king Gagu settled in the north of the plain where he founded the Gougarq while another segment of the same people founded the Shakashen in the plain of Karabagh.

The second wave of the invasion took place in 675, in which the Cimmerians, having headed to the west, set foot on Urartu and settled in central Anatolia, the former land of the Moschki, which thenceforth assumed the name of "Kamir", the Armenian version of the Greek Cimmerians.

As it appears, both prongs of the invaders settled only on the outskirts of the Armenian plateau, and without stopping, passed through Urartu. Consequently, the Urartuan kingdom did not collapse at this time. Yerimena, whose name according to Sandalgian means "From the vacant land", reigned from 675 to 670, then came Roussas III, 670-645. The latter, like his great predecessors, built cities and structures and left behind many inscriptions, which means the Scythian menace temporarily had disappeared. Roussas was succeeded by Sarituris III whom we know to have maintained friendly relations with Assyria. He reigned probably from 645 to 620.

The site of the capital of Sarituris is not

known. Indeed, we find that his successors, Irkounas (620-600) and Menuas II (600-580) no longer reigned in Van. The capital of Urartu has been moved to the Plain of Ararat, at the northern base of Massis, not far from the modern village of Dash Bourou. The kingdom of Urartu, due to the external pressures, had shrunk to the confine of its eastern half. The cause of this was the advent of a new people on the Armenian plateau which was destined to impose its name on that entire land, and of which we shall speak later.

### A Concrete Glance at the Culture of Urartu

A sedentary people and brave warriors, the Urartuans have left behind many traces of their culture. The ruins of their cities, fortifications and water canals are clear proof of their constructive ability. The hundred odd inscriptions they have left behind enable us to enter into their spiritual and intellectual world. With the Urartuans we do not find the brutality and the ruthlessness toward a defeated enemy which characterized the Assyrians, as seen by their inscriptions. The Urartuan kings, on the contrary, seem far more humane and godly, and it is with this mood that they approach their western neighbors the Hittites.

There is no doubt, however, that the Assyrian civilization exerted a powerful influence on the life of Urartu, especially in the beginnings. This influence made its entry and was absorbed after having gone through a complete modification. Thus, the first Urartuan inscriptions are written in Assyrian cuneiform—which in turn were adopted from the Babylonian era—and later a complete change is visible. The Urartuans simplified the ancient Assyrian characters and created an alphabet of 92 symbols which suited their language bet-

ter, a more concrete system of the cuneiform.

The Urartuans called themselves the worshippers of the god Khaldi and never applied to themselves the name of "Urartu" which is of Assyrian origin. Khaldi was the god of light, the principal god of their mythology. They had minor gods who personified the sky, the sun, the moon, the winds, etc.

The Urartuans were first class farmers and animal breeders, witness their highly developed system of canals whose traces are still to be found in Armenia, and those huge flocks and herds which the Assyrians carried away after their victories over Nairi and Urartu.

Finally in Urartu, as in Georgia, metallurgy was highly developed—iron and copper—whose mines and furnaces often come to light in the course of excavations. Thus, in the mineral region of Zangezur there have been unearthed copper mines which belong to the prehistoric era, some of which have a depth of forty meters. The prevalent opinion is that the preparation of the iron was the invention of the Khilibs, or Kalibs—the Khaldisas or the Urartuans—and the region between Armenia and Georgia, according to Greek sources the land of the Khalibs, was considered the center of metallurgy.

### The Traces of Urartuan History in Armenian Tradition

The whole of our historical study hitherto made is based solely on the information supplied by cuneiform inscriptions and excavations. It will be an interesting experiment to determine precisely what this entire prehistoric period has left upon the Armenian tradition.

Moses of Khorene was the first Armenian chronicler who busied himself with the question of Armenian origins.

The first part of his work, "The History of the Armenians," is entitled "The Geneology of the Armenians." Khorenatzi places the origins of the Armenian people at the struggle between Haik and Belus. Haik who, together with the other princes, was cooperating in the construction of the great tower in the Plain of Shinar, loath to submit to Belus' imperialistic designs, left the country and moved to the north. Pursued by Belus, an encounter took place between the two at "Haiotz Tzor" (The Valley of the Armenians) to the south of Lake Van, in which Haik slew Belus with an arrow. Upon his victory, Haik settled in a province of the Armenian Plateau which he called "Hark."

Khorenatzi then describes the feats of Haik's sons and his grandchildren. His elder son Armenak penetrated the Plain of Ararat and occupied the province of Arakadzomn, giving his name to Mount Arakadz. His two other sons, Kor and Manavaz, settled around the Lake Van. Haik's grandson Aramayis (son of Armenak) founded the City of Arnavir near Sardarapat. His two sons, Amasia and Shara, gave their names respectively to (Mount) Massis and the Province of Shirak. Koushara, otherwise known as the Province of Gougarg, belongs to the scions of Shara.

Amasia's elder son Kelam (Kegham) reached as far as Lake Sevan to which he gave his name—Lake of Kelam (Lake Sevan). The River Yeraskh (Araxes) derives its name from his second son Arasan. A sixth generation scion, Sisak, is responsible for the name of the Province of Sisakan, the modern Karabagh and Zangezur.

Finally comes Aram, the great conqueror, after whom the foreigners have called the land of Armenia "Armenik". Aram's son, Ara is the legendary Ara the Beautiful, after whose name the Plain of Ararat was called.

This brief sketch is enough to point out

to us the following highly interesting and impressive coincidence. Haik's sons spread upon the Armenian plateau precisely in the same manner as did the Urtatun kings in the course of authentic history. These, too, first settled around Lake Van and gradually spread out to the north-east, occupied the base of Ararat and from there to Lake Sevan, until finally they became masters of the whole of the modern Mountainous Armenia.

This conjecture may be confirmed by the following series of ethnological and topographical similarities.

Khorenatzi's Manavaz undoubtedly is identical with Menuas I of the Aramian Dynasty. Manavaz's son "Baaz" is the same as the Urtatun Prince "Bias", a contemporary of Arkistis and mentioned in his "Great Inscription". Prince Koushara, the founder of Cougarq, is the Scythian Prince Kaqu of Ashur-banipal's inscription, the Gog of the Old Testament. Aramayis's son Amasia, who gave his name to Mount Massis, is the symbol of a people called "Misa", mentioned in an inscription of Shamsiraman IV. Incidentally this people lived near a mountain so high that "even the winged birds could not fly to the summit". Arast, who gave his name to the River Yeraskh (Araxes) is identical with Prince Erias, a contemporary of Arkistis, whose land was located in the Plain of Ararat, on the left bank of the Araxes.

This list may be lengthened by scores of other cases. Here I offer one instance in order to show that tradition does not preserve the original names but tends always to transform them, to Armenianize them in this case. It is obvious that the name of Arkistis is recovered in the name of the Armenian mountain Arakadz, the explanation of which is immediate. Arkistis was the first Urtatun king who reached the base of Arakadz, and plainly, he gave his name to the mountain. It should be

noted here that, according to Khorenatzi, Arakadz derived its name from the Armenian Patriarch Armenak. Therefore, Armenak should be identified with Arkistis, despite the fact that the phonetic similarity between the two is quite remote.

This much is enough to arrive at the following conclusion. The first part of the book of Khorenatzi which pertains to the six generations which followed Haik, is nothing but a reminiscence of the Urartuan period. Therefore, the Armenian tradition have a historical basis. The trouble is they need accurate interpretation, and as we have said, they should be "understood".

### **The Third Wave of the Aryan Migration in the East**

As we already have established, two kindred peoples of the Phrygians took part in this migration: the Arimaans and the Ashchenazians.

The advent of the Armeno-Phrygians on the Armenian plateau, to this day has been presented in history books as a mysterious, indistinct event. True, we do not possess any inscriptions or foreign sources about this migration, however, we can make a fairly accurate reconstruction by adopting the method of topographical identifications.

Our oldest source on this subject is Homer's *Iliad*, written probably in the 8-9th centuries B.C. In this work the author speaks of the first events of the Trojan War in the 12th century B.C. In the second part of the book Homer gives the name of a country in Asia Minor, near a promontory which he calls "The land of the Arimi". Geographically, this land could have been located only in the vicinity of Mount Argeos in central Anatolia, because Mount Argeos is the only volcano in Asia Minor which has been active up until the historic times. The land of the Arimi, therefore, is none other than the territory in which the

Muschki lived in the 14th century B.C.

After the Trojan war we again find traces of this people. The Assyrian King, Tiglath-Balasar I (1108-1080), in one of his invasions, attacked Malatia from the south and waged a battle against the people of that country on Mount Arouma. That mountain is located to the east of the land of the Arimi, and therefore, it should be sought in the extreme east of the Cilician Taurus range.

In the 9th century B.C., namely, approximately in the days of Homer, another Assyrian king, Shamsiramman (825-812), made an inscription in which he speaks of having exacted tribute from 25 kings of the Nairi, including the land of Arima, a statement which establishes the location of the country beyond question.

From all this, we may safely conclude that, from the 12th to the 8th century B.C., there really existed a people which was called Arimi, or an approximate name, which at first lived in the central part of Armenia Minor, then, in the 9th century, it slowly moved to the east, as far as the crossing of the Armenian and Iranian plateaus.

After the inscription of Shamsiramman, we find no mention of the name Arimi. The Urartuan inscriptions make no mention of it, which proves that this particular people had not yet entered the Armenian plateau. It should be noted here that an inscription of Sarituris II mentions a "land of the Urmani". If the name Urmani really refers to the Armenians, it indicates two things: (a) that in the 8th century B.C. the Armenian people lived in the vicinity of Malatia, on the right banks of the Euphrates, and 2), that the name Arimi has undergone a transformation, resolving itself into the final form of "Armenia".

In our discussion of the Behistun inscription, we shall have occasion to reflect on a second transformation of the name, but



for the present we shall confine ourselves to the Grecian sources about the Armenians. The oldest of these is Herodotus (480-425), according to whom the Armenians and the Phrygians were kindred peoples. This view is confirmed by Eudocius (408-355), according to whom the Armenians belonged to the Phrygian race and spoke a similar language. A few centuries later, Strabo (50-30) confirms Herodotus and places the original location of the Armenians at Thessaly where a city named Armenion existed. All these testimonies give the Armenians a western origin, Phrygian, according to the Greeks.

### The Ashchenazians

There is also another people whose advent on the Armenian plateau may be reconstructed by the same method of geographical analysis. From Homer (*Iliad*) we learn that, at the time of the Trojan War, there was a country named Askania which was located to the south of Phrygia. Ethnologically, the Ashchenazians were Phrygians. The Askanian Lake (modern closely related to their neighbors the Geol) and Mount Gadmus were located in Askania.

In Assyrian inscriptions only twice we encounter a modified form of this name, and both times by King Ashurakhiddina (682-668). In his wars against Manna (Minni), this king once encountered there a new people who were allies of the Mannians and whom he characterizes as "From the land of Askuza". The name Askuza has often been identified with the expressions "Askenazian" or "Askania". Besides the phonetic similarity, this view is confirmed in following manner. In the Old Testament the Prophet Jeremiah (626-585), includes among the enemies of Babylon: the Minni, the Ashchenazi, and the Urartuans (Ara-rat). This proves that the Ashchenazians were the allies of the Minni, and at the

same time identifies the Ashchenazians with the Ashchuzatzis.

Finally we note that, according to Khorenatzi, a grandson of Haik named Cadmus settled in the mountains to the south of Lake Van. As we have observed, the name Cadmus also appears in Ashchenia, an observation which confirms the view that a migration took place from Ashchenia to the south of Lake Van.

Concluding our examination of the "Phrygian migration", we repeat, we see in it the migration of two Phrygian kindred peoples, of which the Arimians were the first to reach the border of the Armenian plateau (in the latter half of the 9th century B.C.), while the Ashchenazians arrived a little later (toward the middle of the 7th century).

### The Conquest of Urartu By the Arimaian

We have seen that, in the latter half of the 7th century, the Armenian plateau and its immediate vicinity were inhabited by various racial elements whose merger gave rise to the present Armenian people. It is possible to insist that, until the downfall of Urartu, the racial merger of the Armenian plateau had not yet begun. Indeed, the Urartuan language during the entire course of its existence did not sustain any great changes, there was no introduction of foreign words, a thing which surely would have happened had a foreign people made incursions on its borders. The racial merger took place suddenly, the result of the confusion caused by the Scythio-Cimmerian migrations.

Let us try to reconstruct the process of Urartu's conquest.

In the latter half of the 8th Century B.C., namely just before the emergence of the Scythians, King Sargon of Assyria succeeded in conquering the southern part of Armenia Minor (712). The conquered terri-

tory included the region of Malatia, thus establishing Assyria between the Muschki and the Urartuans. To preserve such an important country, Sargon built fortifications around it, both against the Muschki and the Urartuans (Sargon, *Annals of Khorsapat Palace*).

The Assyrian kingdom stood the impact of the Scythic-Cimmerian invasion and lasted until 634. It was at this time that the attack on Ninevah took place, led by King Cyaxares who was assisted by the Minni and the Cimmerians. Cyaxares' first attempt to overthrow Ninevah failed, still, as the result of this attack, Assyria lost her northern and extreme north-eastern provinces, including the land of the Minni and Malatia.

It was after the invasion of Cyaxares that probably the first Armenian kingdom was established. Assyria had been so weakened that her internal disintegration already had begun. In 625 a Babylonian general named Nabopolassar revolted against his master and succeeded in seceding Babylonia from the Assyrian empire. Then Nabopolassar and Cyaxares I made an alliance and attacked Ninevah, with the capture of which in 607, the Assyrian Empire came to an end.

It appears from all of this, that the complete liberation of the Armenian plateau from the Assyrian yoke, in all probably, took place around 634-607. It was at this time, also, that the conquest of Urartu by the Armenians was effected. Xenophon (445-355) supplies some information in regard to this development.

The Greek General-historian, in his *Cyropedia*, relates that the Median King Praxabdes (647-634), the father of Cyaxares I, waged long wars against the Armenians and occupied their country. At that time Urartu was ruled by Sarituris III who, as we have noted, left behind no inscriptions, and probably was ruler over only the southern

part of Urartu. The war between the Medes and the Armenians, therefore, must have taken place in the southern part of Urartu. Finally, we learn from the same author that, in the reign of Cyaxares (634-584, the Armenians were in constant wars with the mountaineer Khaldians.

This phase of Armenian history should finally be illuminated by testimony of Khorenatzi. Khorenatzi writes that Patriarch Schayorti's son Barouyr, having allied himself with Varbaces the Median, succeeded in liberating his country from the Assyrian yoke. Barouyr assisted Varbaces in the conquest of Nineveh, and for his reward, he received from Varbaces the title of king, thus becoming the first king of the Armenians.

A comparison of the preceding sources enables us to draw the following conclusion. a) The complete liberation of the Armenian plateau from the Assyrian domination took place in 634—the first invasion of Cyaxares—and not later, b) The conquest of Urartu by the Armenians began during the reign of Sarituris, namely after 645, and lastly, c) By the same logic we are compelled to admit that, during the period of the liberation of the southern part of Armenia Minor, there came into existence a small kingdom which was involved in a struggle with neighboring Urartu whose first Armenian king was Barouyr.

The first king of the Armenians, therefore, was Barouyr, and not Yervand whose reign began only in 580.

The first Armenian kingdom may be reconstructed as follows, partly hypothetical, of course. Barouyr reigned approximately from 634 to 606 and probably was a participant in the conquest of Nineveh. He was succeeded by Hrachya who, according to Khorenatzi, was a contemporary of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Hrachya is supposed to have reigned about 606-580, followed by Yervand, 580-535.

Both Xenophon and Khorenatzi have written about Yervand. He was a contemporary of the Median kings Azhtahak (584-558) and Cyaxares II (558-536) and was still living when Cyrus marched against Lydia (546) and against Babylon (536). The final disappearance of the Urartuan Kingdom probably took place during his reign, thus making him the first Armenian king who took over the whole inheritance of the former Urartu. He was forced to defend his country against the attacks of Ashtahak in which he apparently was defeated and was forced to accept the Median supremacy.

Yervand was succeeded by his son Tigraanes I (535-525) who, definitely, was a contemporary of Cyrus I (535-529) and of Cambyses (529-522), the first two kings of the Achaemenid Dynasty. When Darius I (521-545) ascended the Persian throne, almost all the peoples of his empire revolted against the central authority. Darius has given a detailed description of these events in his tri-lingual Behistun inscription. It is in this inscription that we first find the name of the Armenians mentioned in the form of "Arminia." Armenia was one of the revolting countries, and to subdue her, Darius was obliged to make four campaigns (520-518). Unfortunately the Behistun inscription fails to give the name of the Armenian king, and for this reason, as a matter of historical contingency, the general acceptance has been one of the names supplied by Khorenatzi, Vahagn (?), 525-518.

This small historical improvisation cannot, of course, be accepted as the absolute truth, and yet, far better than its preceding theories, it attempts to reconcile the unfortunately sparse information of this period supplied by the inscriptions, the Greek sources and the Armenian historical tradition.

### The Gradual Evolution of the Form "Arim" Into the Final "Armenia"

As long as the Arimayis (Arimaians) were not permanently settled in one country and were on the constant move, it is quite understandable that they were recognized as a people and the places in which they had settled continued to retain their former names. But when they conquered the Armenian plateau and started to coalesce with the natives, they lost their semi-migratory character and, in turn, became a sedentary people. From that day they were confronted with the question of naming their fatherland.

The Behistun inscription gives the new name of the Armenian Plateau, and that name, as we have seen, was "Arminia," designating the former "Urartu." Let us try to analyze the process of the evolution of the name.

The suffix "Na" means land, as seen in other words, such as Manna (Minni) and Mitana (Mitanni). What is the origin of the prefix "Arm"? Obviously it is a contraction of the words "arim" or "aroum" (arum) of the inscriptions, the vowels (i) and (ou) or (u) having been eliminated by the laws of grammar.

### The Origin of the Armenian People

Our studies so far have brought us to the general conclusion that, in the latter half of the 7th century B.C. the Armenian Plateau had become the habitat of a number of peoples who differed with one another in point of origin. These had been assembled here and settled in the various parts of the plateau during the course of centuries. It will be remembered that these had been divided into two categories: a) the aborigines of Armeno-Caucasian origin who were the progenitors of the Urartuans, and b) the foreigners who had settled on the plateau ever since the 18th century, Aryans by descent who had succeeded one another in successive migratory waves: the

Hiashas, the Khurri, the Muschki, the Arimayis (Arimians), the Ashchenazians, and lastly the Scythians and the Cimmerians. All these peoples fast disappeared from the plateau and gave way to the Armenian people.

Based upon purely historical facts, we had arrived at the conclusion that the Armenian people is the product of the above-mentioned peoples' racial merger, if not of the whole of them, at least a few of them. Now let us see how far this conclusion coincides with the anthropological and philological conclusions of the scholars.

### The Anthropological Evidence

All these anthropologists who have made a study of the Armenian anatomy — the stature, the shapes of the head, the face and the nose, the color of the hair, the eyes and the skin, the proportions of the chest, the arms and the height, etc. etc. are unanimous in their conclusion that, from the anthropological standpoint, the Armenians are the product of a racial mixture and that they have preserved the traces of several racial elements. Five different races are clearly visible in the Armenian anatomy, races which, one way or another, are identical with the races in Europe. These are:

### The Armeno-Caucasian Race

Being quite a unique race, these are the physical characteristics of the Armenians. A tall stature (average height 6 feet), short, or medium short type of head (brachicephalous), flat back of the head, long face, long and narrow nose, straight or aquiline, dark complexion, thick, hirsute hair. The above description fits the majority of the Armenians, approximately 53 percent.

As we have stated at the beginning of this article, the Armeno-Caucasian race comprises the general and a considerably large segment of the population of modern Georgia, Kurdistan and even Turkey. Outside of the Near East, in the western part

of the Balkans as well as the east of the Alps there is a kindred race which is called Dinarian, comprising wholly differing nationalities without any linguistic distinction (the Serbs, the Albanians, the Montenegrins, the Bulgarians, etc.).

The Armeno-Caucasian race no doubt is the race of the original Armenians, otherwise it would not have spread so far and constituted the basic and substantial racial stratum of the neighboring peoples.

### The Alpine Branch

To this race belong approximately 22 percent of the Armenians. Its chief characteristics are: short stature, brachicephalous (pronounced), short face, blue or brown eyes, chestnut or dark brown hair, (not thick).

It is an interesting question to determine what foreign migration brought the Alpine race into the Armenian Plateau. In this respect, we are inclined to point the finger to the Muschki. Indeed, the Alpine race in Europe spread along a belt from the Atlantic to the Black Sea — especially the mountain ranges — and formed one of the oldest strata of the Aryan population of the continent, its principal physical characteristic being its pronounced brachicephalousness. This is also the characteristic of the Muschki people who migrated to the Near East from Europe. They appear on the scene of history approximately at the same time when other Alpine tribes, especially the Celts, were spreading in Europe. Due to this and other factors, the details of which are too long for this discussion, we are inclined to believe the Muschki belonged to the Alpine race.

### The Brachicephalous Races

Races of this category which have been associated with the Armenians are the Mediterraneans, the northerns, and the mixed northern races. The Mediterraneans are short of stature, have long faces, dark

complexion and black hair and eyes. Six percent of the Armenians belong to this race. Their entry into the Armenian Plateau assuredly took place as the direct result of the migrations of the Khurri and generally the Indo-Aryan peoples.

The northern race: tall, long faced, straight nose, blond complexion, gray or blue eyes, red or chestnut hair. Ten percent of the Armenian people belong to this race. We owe their entry into the Armenian Plateau probably to the Hiasas, the Arimayis, the Ashchenazians and the Scythians. Certain scholars are of the opinion that the Cimmerians belonged to the Alpine branch, and not the Northern.

The mixed races of the north and the Dinarians: tall, with various secondary physical characteristics. They constitute 9 percent of the Armenian people. Their entry into Armenia took place during the northern migrations.

A synthesis of the preceding gives the Armenian people the following racial structure: a) a considerable stratum, racially unique, 53 percent b) a considerable stratum of the pre-Aryan brachicephalous race, 22 percent; c) pure-blooded Aryan races, 25 percent.

### The Biological Argument

Without entering into the details, we might say that the human blood has been divided into four groups, designated as A, B, A-B, and O. With the exception of the completely isolated peoples, such as the Eskimos and the American natives who belong to the Blood O category, all the other peoples carry all four categories, variously distributed.

An analysis of the Armenian blood, tested on individuals, presents the following index:

Blood A .....	46-53 %
Blood B .....	10-12 %
Blood A-B .....	5-14 %
Blood O .....	27-33 %

This percentage indisputably classifies the Armenians among the European peoples whose percentage is remarkably close to the Armenian.

It should be noted here that Blood A designates the European races, Blood B the Asiatic and African races (Mongols, Manchus, the negroes, etc.), and Blood O the oldest races of history. Blood A-B signifies a mixture of the two, the law of whose promotion remains unknown to us.

A number of important observations may be deduced from the preceding table. a) The Blood O percentage is small with the Armenians, it never having passed the 33% limit. The significant thing is that this percentage is the smallest among all the peoples of the world. This means the Armenian people is essentially made of young races. This conclusion is further confirmed by the theory based upon archeological excavations that the pre-historic inhabitants of the Armenian Plateau—the original brachicephalous peoples—were annihilated or were driven out with the creation of the Armeno - Caucasian race, approximately three millennia B.C.

b) The great quantity of Blood A. If we classify the various peoples of the world according to Blood A percentage, it will be discovered that the Armenians occupy third place, immediately below the Portuguese (52%), and the Norwegians (50%). This phenomenon which is partly the result of the comparatively small percentage of Blood O, proves that it is the European type essentially which prevails in the biological constitution of the Armenian people. Were this not the case, the Blood A percentage would not have been so high.

c) Percentage of Blood A and Blood A-B highest in the world. If we add the number of individuals who carry Blood A and Blood A-B, we shall see that, even in the most adverse circumstances, the sought after percentage is not below 56, a per-



centage which is the highest in the world. And since Blood A-B may be considered a derivative of Blood A, the combined total percentage in the Armenian people proves them to be the product of the mixture of the most typical European races in the world.

### **The Philological Factor**

After long philological debates, this question may well be considered as settled today. The Armenian language is classified among the western branch of Indo-European languages, as a unique subdivision. Countless experiments have been made to compare the Armenian with this or that language. The opinion generally prevails that the Armenian language is closely related to Thracian and Phrygian ancient Aryan languages, which, incidentally, have dimly been recognized, and have been subjected substantially to the influence of Greek and Iranian languages.

According to latest philological research, more than the Thracian, the Armenian language shows traces of Lydian or Carian languages. On the shores of the Mediterranean, Lydia and Caria were countries to the southwest of Phrygia.

Finally, the Urartian language, too, has left its traces on the Armenian language, the absence of gender, the presence of 3-400 words and a few secondary grammatical peculiarities.

The presence, or the traces of several languages fully confirms our conclusion that the Armenian people was the product of the merger of a number of racial elements and languages.

### **A General Conclusion on the Origins of the Armenian People**

In the merger of the races which took place, or began, to be precise, in the latter half of the 7th century B.C., each participating people brought with her native capacities and culture. Simultaneously with

the blending of the blood, there was also a blending of the cultures, giving rise to an entirely new culture. The natives of Urartu, which, due to its geographical position, was under the immediate influence of a number of advanced cultures of Mesopotamia, had developed, in turn, a high degree of civilization. The simple fact that Urartu left behind a number of inscriptions, namely, the fact that she had mastered the art of writing, shows the degree of her cultural advancement as compared with, for instance, her Caucasian neighbors.

As against all this, what did the Indo-European invaders bring with them? These had attained the general cultural level of the Aryans of the time, which was not higher than that of the Urartians. Yet, as the future history showed, the Aryans possessed a great racial quality, namely, their capacity for creating a high culture. Besides, the Armenians brought with her a language which, far better than the native Japhetic language, was capable of accurately expressing all the colors and the hues of the human mind by virtue of which it replaced the Urartian.

In the process of racio-cultural union, the Urartians lost their religion, their language and their methods of fighting, their contribution to the merger being their information of an agricultural people, their customs and mores and their virtues, the secret of the preparation of the iron, etc. On the other hand, the Indo-Europeans contributed to the merger with their language and their social structure based upon highly disciplined family standards. Lastly, it should be noted that all the constituents of the merger had the necessary quality for racial endurance which is valor and daring. They were good warriors and this trait made the Armenians famous for centuries.

### **The Survival of the Urartian Nobility**

Here should be noted a significant char-

acteristic of the merger, in regard to which, in our opinion, the necessary attention has not been paid, and which supplies the long sought after explanation of the name "Hai".

We have seen that the cuneiform inscriptions have supplied us not only the names of Urartuan kings, but the names of the outstanding princes of that land. We find that a part of those names has been recovered centuries after the fall of Urartu in the names of the nobility. Some of these names lasted until the 7th and 8th centuries, others until the fall of the Bagratid kingdom in the 11th century A.D. It means, the Urartuan nobility, while changing its language, religion and culture, physically survived long after the fall of Urartu.

In this connection, Basmadjian has made a study of more than 250 ancient names, fully one third of which he has identified with the ancient Armenian nobility. For instance, the following Urartuan names beginning with the letter "a", Abouni, Azamerouni, Aguni, Ardzi (all princely houses), have survived in later Armenian nobility houses as the Abahounis, the Azamians, the Akians, the Artzrunis, etc.

The survival of the Urartuan nobility played a historic role in the preservation of the Armenian nation, by supplying the newly-created nation, for its defense and direction, ready organizations which, due to their centuries-old experience, ready organizations which, due to their centuries-old experience, succeeded in surmounting the dangers which posed at the very outset of its birth, and to preserve its existence at a time when the neighboring peoples were vanishing from the scene of history one after another, such as the Minni, the Phrygians, the Medes etc. This is additional proof that a real merger on the Armenian Plateau did take place, that the natives were not annihilated, but that they became a constituent part of the newly-created nation.

### The Explanation of the Expression "Hai".

We have seen that 15 centuries before Christ the Armenian Plateau was called "Hiasha", proving the existence of the word "Hai" long before the founding of the Urartuan kingdom. Following the fall of Urartu, centuries after the disappearance of the Khaldians, the word "Hai" is still found on the plateau as the name of a people. Since the only element which survived from the pre-Urartuan period to the post-Urartuan period was the nobility, we naturally are forced to the conclusion that the name of the pre-Urartuan nobility was "Hai", and it was this nobility which gave its name to the newly-created people.

We already have suggested a number of times that the origin of the Urartuan kingdom is to be sought in the northern part of the Armenian Plateau, the site of the Hiasha. The philological explanation of the word "Hai" lends support to this view.

According to a view advanced by various scholars, the word "Hai" is derived from the Sanscrit "Pati" or the Zendish "Pat", both of which mean "head" or "princes." Thus the word "Pater" has evolved into "Hair", the Armenian word for "father", the letter "p" having been changed into "h", and the letter "t" into "i". From the philological standpoint such an evolution is not unusual.

### The First Period of Foreign Domination

During the Median era, Armenia, nominally as a part of the empire, enjoyed a wide range of freedom. After the conquest of Darius, Armenia became a province of the empire, administratively being divided into two satrapies. The capital of western Armenia probably was Malatia, governed by a simple Satrap. Eastern Armenia, on the contrary, enjoyed a far more favorable position, generally being administered by

a high ranking prince of the Persian kingdom.

The Persian Achaemenid Dynasty lasted until the conquest of Alexander the Great, altogether two centuries (536-331). By entering into the vast Persian empire, young Armenia benefited both spiritually (the Achaemenids basically were Aryan), and materially (roads, production and commerce). The power of the Persian empire gradually became far more superficial than real. The retreat of the Ten Thousand in the beginning of the 4th century is a clear indication of the weakening of the central authority. It took Alexander the Great two or three decisive battles to seize the whole of the Near East. Alexander united the two Armenias into a single province which he delivered to the Persian Prince Mihran (330-356).

After the death of Alexander, in the ensuing scramble of his generals over the spoils, Armenia went through a turbulent period, at first under the Greek Prince Neoptolomy (323-321), and then by Orontes the Persian (321-305), and finally, by the Armenian Prince Artuirt (305-280).

After the Battle of Issus in 301, Seleucus Nicator, one of Alexander's generals who in 312 already had laid the foundation of a new empire in Mesopotamia, prevailed upon his rivals to recognize his supremacy over Armenia, Media and Persia.

It appears that Seleucus, in turn, recognized the independence of Armenia under Prince Artuirt. Upon the latter's death in 280 Armenia was subjected to a new division, effected by Atropates, the Satrap of Media. Atropates revolted against the Seleucid Emperor and declared Media independent, then he attacked Armenia and seized her eastern provinces. This Atropates gave his name to Media which eventually became the classical Aderbatakan (the modern Azerbaijan). The remainder of Armenia in the south-west was organized

into a kingdom which, in turn, accepted the supremacy of the Seleucids. Of this dynasty, the following kings have come down to us: Arsham (230-210) who built the City of Arshamakert, the new capital of his kingdom, then Xerxes (210-200), and Zareh (200-165) whose history will be taken up later in this study.

During the Median, Persian and Seleucid dominations, no new racial element infiltrated Armenia. The Seleucid era in particular marked the mass introduction of Hellenic culture, a culture under the influence of which the Seleucids themselves lived. Thanks to this culture, the Armenian people made great progress, became refined, and by the time of the fall of the Seleucids Armenia was ready to organize and to function as a unique state.

### General Conclusion on the Pre-historic Period

The pre-historic era which is the period of the origins of the Armenian people came to its end at the beginning of the reign of Darius I, and yet we have traced our history to the end of the Seleucid domination because it was only in this period that true equality of politico-cultural influence was firmly established on the Armenian Plateau.

From the fall of the Seleucid dynasty (30 B.C.) to the period of Arab domination the Armenian plateau became the arena of a conflict between the following two powerful and mutually opposing influences: a) The Persian empire followed by the Sassanids in the east, and the Mediterranean empire in Mesopotamia, first under Rome and later under Byzantium, in the west.

The Persian empire in the east based its strength on the Indo-Aryan peoples of the Iranian Plateau; the Mediterranean empire in the west was dominated by the

Indo-European civilization, thus, once families. This interval of eight centuries again, making the Armenian plateau a undoubtedly constitute the second great point of contact between two great Aryan period of Armenian history.

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### *To a Noble Knight*

*(Fridtjof Nansen)*

*Sleep in peace, heroic soul,  
Prince of love, who freely gave  
A noble dream conceived in faith,  
Which has endured beyond the grave.*

*Many there are who come and go  
With promises on their lips, although  
Betrayal followed overnight,  
Even before the cock's first crow.*

*There you stand, justice enthroned,  
A power for good that shall not cease,  
Symbol of victory's requisites,  
Courageous action, honor and peace.*

*You are a beacon, standing firm,  
Guiding mankind with your radiant light  
Into the day of world-wide peace,  
Fulfilling our dreams, O Noble Knight!*

NUVER KOUMYAN

# KORUN'S BIOGRAPHY OF MASHTOTZ

A FIRST ENGLISH TRANSLATION

A. SAHAKIAN

## I

*I was thinking of glorifying in a special commemorative book (Text. To make blossom forth in bookform) [All] about the God-given letters of the Askanazian nation<sup>2</sup> and of the land of the Armenians, as to when and at what time they were provided and by what kind of person such a divine gift was obtained (T. appeared), and about this person's luminous doctrine and angel-like virtuous religion.*

And while I was thinking in my own mind [about this task], an order came to me from a fine man, named Joseph,<sup>3</sup> a disciple of the same man (i.e., *Mashtotz*), and with it (with the order) the encouragement of our co-students; although I was a junior

<sup>1</sup> The full Armenian title of this book reads as follows: "Story of the life and death of the blessed Vardapet Mesrop, our translator, by his disciple Korun Vardapet".

<sup>2</sup> Askanazian nation: This is another name for the Armenians; this name occurs for the first time in the Bible (Jer. 51:27), as a kingdom near Ararat, in Armenia. Askanazians really were a Scythian tribe, who after invading southern Caucasus, came down to settle in the Eastern part of Armenia, probably in the 7th or 8th century B.C. Later on they became a component part of the Armenian nation. This name has been often mentioned by old Armenian historians as equivalent of Armenia, but almost always with the immediate addition of this latter name.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph: He is one of senior disciples of Mashtotz, who was to become *locum tenens* of the catholicate after the deaths of St. Sahak and St. Mashtotz.

[but nevertheless] a special student,<sup>4</sup> and this strict order was beyond our capacity,<sup>5</sup> just the same [I was obliged] to redact the proposed [story] post haste and without delay. From all of them,<sup>6</sup> we beg to unite with us in prayer, to recommend us to divine grace, so that we could navigate straight and successfully on the all-spreading waves of the ocean of learning.

## II

And now, let us first consider, whether it is permissible to write about the activities of perfect people, not by [advancing] our own ideas with oratorical argument, but by citing example [from the Bible], we prove the contrary.<sup>7</sup> Because the beneficent God, has thought so about his loved ones, that He does not consider sufficient for the righteous, the fine and high reward in the infinite eternity; but also [He wants

<sup>4</sup> Special Student: That is what Korun calls himself, the meaning is not clear, unless he means that he was very close to Mashtotz.

<sup>5</sup> It will be noted that the author, referring to himself, uses both singular and plural pronouns, even in the sentence.

<sup>6</sup> The reference is to his co-students, see a few lines above.

<sup>7</sup> Here Korun wants to say: "We prove the contrary to the idea that it is not permissible to write about the deeds of accomplished." The fact that Korun feels necessary to quote from the Bible, to prove that it is permissible to do so, suggests that there were influential people, who would consider such an undertaking as wrong.



to reward them] in advance, right here, in this temporal life, by being told about in books, so that they shine both in their corporal and spiritual selves<sup>8</sup> with heavenly splendor.

And in the mosaic story, the nobility of the blessed people is evident, [so are] the firmness of their true faith, the decency of their lives in the closeness and nearness of God and the splendor of their admirable lives. Because one was called *righteous*,<sup>9</sup> for his acceptable sacrifice, and another, despite the omnivorous death, was left alive for his agreeable deeds,<sup>10</sup> and still another was saved [for] his complete righteousness, for a whole year living in a vessel, with all the animals, on the mountain-high, all covering (*T. all-spread*) sea, [which was caused] by divine wrath;<sup>11</sup> and another one has received (*T. inherited*) the promise of future well being [who] by his newly found faith, became righteous and converted, and entered into covenant with God.<sup>12</sup> And others like them, whose goodness is told in divine books, [and who] are known to God.

As I said, Paul the blessed,<sup>13</sup> [in his epistle] to the Hebrews, giving names, praises the truth of their faith, by which, each of them, according to his work (*T. progress*) has received rewarding consolation from God, the giver of all. Also he cites, as an example (*T. he compares*) Rahab the villain,<sup>14</sup> who harbored the spies. But considering the large number of the righteous, Paul only mentions the names of a few, and passes over the rest, not [finding] enough time to tell (about) all.

<sup>8</sup> Korun wants to say: "They shall shine with their actual deeds and spiritual accomplishments."

<sup>9</sup> "He obtained witness that he (Abel) was righteous." (Heb. 11:4)

<sup>10</sup> Reference is to Enoch. (Heb. 11:5)

<sup>11</sup> Reference to Noah.

<sup>12</sup> Reference to Abraham.

<sup>13</sup> Paul the Apostle.

<sup>14</sup> Rahab was a harlot of Jericho, who hid the spies sent by Joshua. (Josh. 2:1-24)

Afterwards he mentions the trials, to which they were subjected, and their martyrdom without resistance, which he (Paul) considers better than all worldly goods.

By the same manner, all the books that are inspired by the Holy Ghost, have recorded the valor of all the soldiers, some for their victory in the interest of the religion of God, others for their prowess and bravery in worldly combat and war, such as Nebroth and Samson and David; and the natural wisdom of some others is praised along divine wisdom, such as Joseph's in Egypt,<sup>15</sup> and Daniel's in Babylon;<sup>16</sup> among them they were some advisers to powerful kings, who were showing them worldly ways (*i.e. solving the worldly problems of the king*) and at the same making them to know God, the Lord of all.

Even the prophet, praising the wisdom [of such people] had said to someone of them: "Art thou wiser than Daniel? or did wise counselors advise thee with their intelligence?"<sup>17</sup> And not only so much, but also he praises the power of the saints by sending messenger angels, who called Daniel "enviable", and in Galilee, [he called] the Holy Mother of the Lord "Blessed among women".

But what shall we say of the praises which two equals were receiving from each other, whose goodness, the Lord of everything Himself was proclaiming aloud, not only [the goodness] of their openly known deeds, but also whatever brightness was hidden in their hearts and men.<sup>18</sup>

As He made known to Abraham, whose hospitality and services He had witnessed with the angels, by telling him, after receiving his promises, what He was to do

<sup>15</sup> Joseph, son of Jacob. (Gen. 37)

<sup>16</sup> Daniel the prophet.

<sup>17</sup> The quotation is from Ezek. 28:3, "Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee". But the Armenian version, which follows the Septuagint, is somewhat different, and just as Korun has quoted.

<sup>18</sup> It is not clear to whom Korun is referring.

in Sodom;<sup>19</sup> in the same manner, He was praising the brave champion Job, in front of the combatant,<sup>20</sup> before the combat, by saying: "A true man, righteous and god-fearing, and separated from all evil deeds."<sup>21</sup>

Although the closeness of the great Moses to God was proclaimed in every ecclesiastical book, yet his youthful vivaciousness is revealed in divine law,<sup>22</sup> neither is the counsel of the alien father is left unwritten.<sup>23</sup>

And so all the good deeds of the artesans of religion,<sup>24</sup> whose blessed names cannot be all mentioned, shine in the God-written books,<sup>25</sup> and not only the previous ones,<sup>26</sup> but also in the luciferous Gospel, the goodness of those who came after the only begotten Son of God, the Saviour of all, was glorified,<sup>27</sup> above all, not only He was rewarding His own Twelve,<sup>28</sup> or the preceding Baptist<sup>29</sup> with blessings, but He was

[also] praising the trueness of the faith of other devout persons.<sup>30</sup>

Because He declares Nathaniel to be without guile;<sup>31</sup> also He says that the greatness of the faith of the descendant of the king is not to be found in Israel.<sup>32</sup> But Christ, who honors the humble, not only exalts the prominent ones (*T. the big ones*), but also the little ones (*T. the lighter ones*), who [even] takes in consideration the use of a little oil, and the memory of the users [of such oil] is mentioned everywhere under the skies.<sup>33</sup> And He calls the faith of the Canaanite woman<sup>34</sup> "great"; also He praises the willingness of the giver of two mites more than that of the more prominent.<sup>35</sup>

And He makes Paul, who had planned (*T. had put in his mind*) to stifle the bright light of the rules set out by Christ, the bearer in this world of his wonderful name, and calls him "A chosen vessel".<sup>35</sup>

Therefore the blessed [Paul], looking at the magnitude of the Grace bestowed on himself and all the other saints for their faith, begins to glorify with loud voice: "God's grace is making us renowned in everything, and the essence of His knowledge is being made known everywhere through us."<sup>37</sup>

On top of it he says more openly: "Who can put blame (*T. spot*) on the selected

<sup>19</sup> The reference here is to Gen. 18:17 and fol. The text of Korun is not clear, scholars have understood differently, we translated according our understanding.

<sup>20</sup> The combatant: The Satan.

<sup>21</sup> This quotation is from the Armenian version of Job 1:8, which again follows the Septuagints, and is somewhat different from the King James version.

<sup>22</sup> Divine law: This is understood "divine legend" by Abelina, while Banian understands it the Deuteronomy, but actually it is in Exodus 2, that is spoken of the childhood of Moses.

<sup>23</sup> Jethro: He is the father-in-law of Moses. (Exodus 18:17-23)

<sup>24</sup> Religious Artesans: Those who founded the religion, the first Fathers of the Church, the Patriarchs, the Prophets etc.

<sup>25</sup> God-written book: The Bible.

<sup>26</sup> The previous ones: The books of the old Testament.

<sup>27</sup> Glorified: The Armenian word in the text is *ծաղկեցանք*, to make or cause to blossom forth. This expression simply means to glorify in writing (cf. New Arm. Dict. vol. I, p. 1003). Banian misses the point when he explains in the little lexicon, at the end of his translation, this word as to mean to flourish, as if to make flourish the literature etc.

<sup>28</sup> His own Twelve: The Twelve Apostles.

<sup>29</sup> The text, following the Armenian custom, uses a special name for John the Baptist, this name (*Կարապետ*) means a leader of a caravan, a forerunner, a precursor.

<sup>30</sup> The text reads: *զայլոյ ժառանգելոյ*. Abelian translates "Others who have approached". Banian's translation reads "The faith offered by others".

<sup>31</sup> Nathaniel: One of the Twelve Apostles, sometimes identified with Bartholomew; the quotation is from John 1:47. "Behold an Israelite in whom is no guile."

<sup>32</sup> Matt. 8:10.

<sup>33</sup> Matt. 26:7-13.

<sup>34</sup> "Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman great is thy faith." Matt. 15:28.

<sup>35</sup> Luke 21:3.

<sup>36</sup> "But the Lord said unto him: Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the gentiles and kings and the children of Israel." Acts 9:15.

<sup>37</sup> 2nd Corinth. 2:14.

ones of God<sup>38</sup> and the blessed apostles have received permission<sup>39</sup> from the Lord to describe in writing the valour of all their collaborators. Some [of these descriptions] could be seen in the Gospels, and some [others] in the Acts of the Apostles, [which] Luke the blessed has written;<sup>40</sup> There are also [some] which are better illustrated in the Catholic Epistles.<sup>41</sup>

But St. Paul, in fourteen epistles,<sup>42</sup> tells about his co-apostles and co-fighters (*T. co-lancers*), whom he makes participants of his joy, and at the end of the epistles he [gives] perfect salutation to each one of them and inquires [about] them by name; and he cites praises of one [of them] from the Gospel; he not only respects the help given by the blessed ones, but he gives many praises to his Christ-honoring hosts for the respect that they had shown; therefore, by offering supplications to God, begs Him to reward their benefactions, and he proclaims the goodness of all chosen [ones] in all the Churches, not only the men, but the women as well, who became disciples<sup>43</sup> [and] preached the Gospel.

And all this was not for the [purpose of] boasting, but so that they set the example and the rule for those who will come later. Just as he urges all to be envious of good

deeds by saying: "Follow love and be envious of spiritual things."<sup>44</sup>

To them he told in Macedonia about the willingness of Achaians to worship the saints, and [thus] he made them envious [and] he induced them (to be good).<sup>45</sup> Also he permits [to be envious] of good [people].<sup>46</sup> Also he urged them to be like himself and like the Lord.

Again he hastens, with all the people, to follow in the footsteps of Christ; "Look," he says "at Christ, the commander of the army of the faithful and the finisher [of our faith],"<sup>47</sup> and again, as: "Remember your leaders who spoke to you the word of God, observe their manners, be like them."<sup>48</sup> And at the same time, as: "think of this, everyone of you [who believe in Christ Jesus]."<sup>49</sup>

In like manner, Luke also puts at the beginning of the apostle-made book, while James, the very enviable brother of the Lord, citing as example the entire group of the saints with the holiness-loving Lord,<sup>50</sup> says in his epistle: "Take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of endurance and patience, you have heard of the patience of Job, and you have seen the end of the Lord."<sup>51</sup>

Therefore from what we have said, it is evident that the praise of the chosen ones is from the Lord [Himself]; some (are praised) by the angels, some [are praised] by each other, not for their personal glory, but to cause envy of each other, so that encouraged by each other, we attain extreme goodness, the appointed goal of the

<sup>38</sup> "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect." Rom. 9:23.

<sup>39</sup> Permission: The Armenian word used in the text is «օգնութիւն», which ordinarily means help, assistance, this is the meaning that Banian has given to this word; but the word also means permission (cf. Yeznik I, 19), and here Korun has made use of the word in its unusual meaning.

<sup>40</sup> The Authorship of the "Acts" has been ascribed to Luke the evangelist.

<sup>41</sup> The Catholic Epistles: This name has been given by the early Church, to seven epistles by James, Peter John and Jude; these epistles were addressed to all churches, contrasting the Pauline epistles, which were addressed to an individual church or an individual.

<sup>42</sup> The Pauline epistles.

<sup>43</sup> Some MM. have «սարկեղանկն» (made chaste), instead of «աշակերտանկն» (made disciples).

<sup>44</sup> "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye prophesy." I Corinth. 14:1.

<sup>45</sup> II Corinth. 9:2.

<sup>46</sup> Galatians, 4:18.

<sup>47</sup> Heb. 12:2.

<sup>48</sup> Heb. 13:7.

<sup>49</sup> Philip. 2:5.

<sup>50</sup> Holiness-loving: The Arm. word «սրբասէր» could be understood two ways: 1. lover of saints; 2. lover of holiness, or sanctity.

<sup>51</sup> James 5:10-11.

blessed Paul, as: "To reach together the measure of the stature of Christ",<sup>52</sup> he whose salvation is in heaven, should expect the Saviour, the great god.<sup>53</sup>

We also have the gracefully written canonical scriptures [which] follow the [writings of the] Apostles, as to how they honored and praised each other, for their true faith and evangelical behaviour, [and] until this day they act in the same manner.

And now having received permission from both,<sup>54</sup> [we shall] put in writing the life of the righteous one.<sup>55</sup> Then from now on let the promised [story] be put forward, and this will be done by us in a respectful manner worthy to a father, and so, their<sup>56</sup> tenderly given order shall be fulfilled<sup>57</sup> to the best of our ability.

### III

The name of the man, of whom we are making an effort to discourse, and who is referred to in our prologue, is Mashtotz,<sup>58</sup> from the region of Taron,<sup>59</sup> and from the

village of Hatzek, the son of a blessed man called Vardan.<sup>60</sup>

He was, in the years of his youth, educated in Greek literature, [and later] he had come to the Court (*T. door*) of the Arsacid Kings of Greater Armenia; he remained in the royal chancery to be an attendant (*T. servant*) of the King's orders,<sup>61</sup> [this was] at the time of the ministry of our land of Armenia, of a certain Aravan.<sup>62</sup>

He was informed of and well versed in lay affairs, and endeared himself by his [good] military training, to the soldiery.<sup>63</sup> There, he gave his attention to the reading of divine books, by which he was enlightened, and fully understood the meaning of the God-given law (*T. orders*) endowing (*T. ornamenting*) himself with every preparedness [for religious life], while he was in the service of the princes.<sup>64</sup>

### IV

And therefore, he turned to the service of the kind God, in the measure of the Gospel;<sup>65</sup> thereafter he cast off all worldly<sup>66</sup> cravings, and taking up the cross of glory,<sup>67</sup> he came out to follow the crucified Saviour of all. And accepting the rules (of

<sup>52</sup> Ephes. 4:13.

<sup>53</sup> Philip. 3:20.

<sup>54</sup> Both: Korun either means "both from the Bible and other canonized writings", or "both from the Old and New Testaments."

<sup>55</sup> The righteous one: St. Mashtotz.

<sup>56</sup> Their: Korun is referring to the people who asked him to write this biography, namely Joseph and Korun's other co-students (see chap. 1 of this translation).

<sup>57</sup> The text is obscure and has been variously interpreted. Abelian, Banian and Funduklian hopelessly disagree in their interpretations.

<sup>58</sup> Here for the first time the name "Mashtotz" is mentioned. Korun always uses this name to mention his teacher; on the other hand both Little Korun and Moses of Khoren call him "Mesrop"; Lazar of Pharb calls him most of the time "Mashtotz", only in one section which is an obvious interpolatory copy from Moses, the name Mesrop reappears. Later historians mostly use this latter name in preference to Mashtotz. A satisfactory explanation has not been given for either appellation.

<sup>59</sup> Taron: An important region of Armenia, west of Lake Van.

<sup>60</sup> Vardan: A common Armenian name, especially popular among the Mamikonian clan. About this particular Vardan there is no further information, the epithet "blessed" implies some spiritual qualification, could he be a priest?

<sup>61</sup> At this period the King of Armenia was Khosrov III.

<sup>62</sup> Aravan: Nowhere else mentioned; the function of the minister, who is called Հայաբան (chiliarch), was to manage all internal affairs of the country, a similar function with the same title existed in Persia. See Handes Amsorya 1898, pp. 316 through 320.

<sup>63</sup> Soldiers of the royal guard, Funduklian understands these to be "his comrades".

<sup>64</sup> Measure of the Gospel: Total dedication of one's self to the service of God.

<sup>65</sup> Abelian translates: "he cast off all princely".

<sup>66</sup> To take the cross: To enter into religious life, become a clergyman.

<sup>67</sup> Cross Bearing: Leading a every stern life.

religious life), he joined the cross-bearing<sup>68</sup> troops of Christ, and immediately he entered monachal life.<sup>69</sup>

He endured many and varied sufferings concerning all things according the [teachings] of the Gospel, and he trained himself in all [kinds] of spiritual exercises, [such as] monastic life, living in the mountains, hunger, thirst, vegetarianism, dark dungeons, cilice wearing, ground spread pallet. And many times he satisfied the need of sleep and pleasant rest of the night in a twinkling of an eye, and in standing nakedness. And he did these things not for a short time. And finding some people, he attracted them to him to be disciples of the same preachings of the Gospel.

And thus, with willingness, he endured all the hardships that came along, and became known and agreeable to God and men.

## V

Thereafter the blessed one<sup>70</sup> took [with him] his faithful and went to the disorderly and uncared for places of Gotham.<sup>71</sup> Also<sup>72</sup> the prince of Gotham came to meet him; he (the prince) was a pious and God-loving person, whose name was Shabith,<sup>73</sup> who became a good host [to Mashtotz and his disciples], and served them piously according to the [rules] of the faith of the disciples of Christ (*i.e. the Christians*). But the blessed one with the sincere assistance of the [said] prince, immediately undertook to preach the Gospel (*T. to make use of the art of the Gospel*), all over the region. He retrieved all [the peoples] from their

<sup>68</sup> Monachial Life: That of a monastic monk.

<sup>70</sup> The blessed one: It would be noted that Korun refers to Mashtotz mostly with an epithet, such as *The righteous one* or *the blessed one*.

<sup>71</sup> Golthess: A region of Eastern Armenia, renowned as wine producing country.

<sup>72</sup> The word "also" is superfluous, unless there was originally another phrase now missing.

<sup>73</sup> Shabit: This name is spelled Շաբիթ (Shabith) both in Korun's text and in Moses of Khoren, but Little Korun has Շամպիթ (Shampith), some Ms. omit the name.

native (*T. paternal*) traditions and from the evil cult of demonolatriy,<sup>74</sup> and made them servants of Christ.

And when he sowed in them the word of life, many remarkable signs clearly appeared to the population; demons in many forms fleeing [from the preaching of the Gospel], were taking refuge in Media.<sup>75</sup>

Similarly, he was worrying about the salvation of the entire country, and he was increasing is ever murmuring prayers, and spread-armed supplications to God, and he was incessantly shedding tears, thinking of the apostolic [saying]: "It is sadness to me and unending aches to my heart, about my brethren and relatives."<sup>76</sup>

And thus, surrounded by, and trapped in sad worries, he was thinking deeply, to find a way to [accomplish] this thing (*i.e. total conversion or salvation of the country*).

## VI

And after lingering on this [matter] for many days, he got up and went to the holy catholicos of Greater Armenia, whose name was known to be Sahak,<sup>77</sup> whom he found equally anxious for the same. And

<sup>74</sup> Demonolatriy: At the period, of which Korun is speaking, it existed in Armenia, besides Christianity, two more religions; first the old mythological cult, the followers of this cult were driven to the remote corners of the land, particularly Eastward. Second, Mazdaism, which was the official religion of the Persian empire, and was being forced upon the Armenians.

In this passage Korun does not state whether Mashtotz was fighting against the followers of the first or second cult, but the mention of Demons suggests the old religion.

<sup>75</sup> Accounts of demons fleeing from the missionary work of an apostle of Christianity could be found elsewhere in Armenian history, cf. Agath. CVIII. p. 586. Zenob, History of Taron, p. 33 etc. Naturally the *demons* were simply the magi of the pagan religion.

<sup>76</sup> Rom. 9:2-3.

<sup>77</sup> St. Sahak: He was of the noble family of Parthev, the son of St. Nerses the Great, who preceded him on the chair of the Catholicate; St. Sahak was elected Catholicos in the year 387, (389 according Ormanian) he was deposed by the Persians (A.D. 428), but he came back, and was considered by the Armenians their spiritual leader, until his death (Sept. 7, 439).



the two of them willingly united, [and] started to pray early every morning, begging God [to make possible] for everybody, the salvation Christ promised (*T. brought*). And they did this for many days.

Then it occurred to them, as if a gift from all-good God, [the idea] of calling to council, some blessed people of same mind,<sup>78</sup> [for the purpose of] taking care of this matter and come by the invention of the alphabet for our land of Armenia.

They busied themselves by making many inquiries and doing much research work, and suffered much labor; and then they informed [the object] of their quest to the king of the Armenians, whose name was Vramshapuh.

Then the King told them about a certain Syrian nobleman, a bishop named Daniel,<sup>79</sup> who had suddenly (*accidentally*?) found the characters of an alphabet for the Armenian language.<sup>80</sup> And when they were told by the King about the find,<sup>81</sup> they persuaded him to take care of this matter. And [the King] sent somebody, called Vahrij, [empowered] with edicts, to a priest called Habel, who was the kin of the Syrian bishop Daniel.<sup>82</sup>

When Habel heard this, hastily went to Daniel, and first himself learnt from Daniel [the details] of the characters, and after taking them from him, he sent them to the King at the land of the Armenians; [Habel]

made [the characters] reach the King in the fifth year of his reign.<sup>83</sup>

And the King, together with the saints Sahak and Mashtotz, received the alphabet from Habel, and they were glad.

Later the blessed ones, in charge of this work, received that, for which they were wishing, and which they had suddenly found, and they asked the King for children of tender age, so that they could put to use (*T. to kindle*) the characters; and as many of them began to learn, [the King] ordered to teach them (i.e. the newly discovered letters) everywhere.

And then, the blessed one (*Mashtotz*) attained the fine position of *vardapet*,<sup>84</sup> and for about two years he taught by using these same letters.

But they found out that these letters were not sufficient to spell correctly the syllables and ties of the Armenian language, especially since they happened to be of another literature,<sup>85</sup> buried and brought to light again; [therefore] they turned again to the same task, and they

<sup>82</sup> No explanation is given why the King should send a message or an order to Habel, and not directly to Daniel.

<sup>83</sup> Vramshapuh was king in 391 or 392 A.D.; this puts the arrival of the Danielian characters to Armenia in the year 397; the date on which Vramshapuh became king differs according to several scholars and historians, here are some examples:

M. Manandian	387
Alishan	391
Ormanian	392
Chamchian	392-393
Funduklian	398
Marquard	398-399

<sup>84</sup> In the fifth century this word meant "teacher".

<sup>85</sup> Other literature: what other literature had used this alphabet, and then forgot it? This question has tortured the minds of many learned philologists, without a conclusive answer. Prof. Ajarian has a very intensive study of all the opinions on this matter. (*Armenian Letters*, in *Arm.*, Vienna 1928, pp. 59-106) in which he concludes that the alphabet in question belonged to an extinct Semitic race of Mesopotamia; but this conclusion is just another rationalization and cannot be accepted as final, therefore the "Danielian Alphabet" still remains a mystery.

<sup>78</sup> Of same mind: the Armenian word in the text is *սխաբանից* (united in their ideas). It is not possible to know who these people were, or from what class, but it is safe to assume that the call for the council was sent out to people sympathetic to the idea of inventing an alphabet for the Armenians, and also of some education to be helpful in this matter.

<sup>79</sup> Daniel: According J. Marquard (*History of Arm. Characters*, *Arm. trans.*, Vienna 1913, p. 44) Daniel was bishop of Arzon (Altznik).

<sup>80</sup> The text is obscure, some MM. have *գրեալ* (written) instead of *գտեալ* (found). Funduklian has neither.

<sup>81</sup> See the note above.

were trying for some time to find the solution [of the problem].

## VII

Therefore on the fifth year<sup>86</sup> of Vramshapuh, King of Armenians, the blessed Mashtotz, with the permission of the King, and the consent of St. Sahak, took some of his pupils (T. children) and taking leave from each other with a holy embrace, he started on the road and went to two cities of Aram.<sup>87</sup> The first one of these [cities] is called Edessa, and the name of the second one is Amida; [there] he met two saint bishops, of whom the first one was called Babilas, and the second Acocius,<sup>88</sup> [Mashtotz] was received by them and by the clergy and princes of these cities with great respect, and [he was treated] with great care, according to the rule of Christianity.

But the disciple-loving teacher, divided those whom he had brought along, in two [group], leaving one (group) in Edessa to learn Syriac, while he sent the other [group] to Samosata<sup>89</sup> to learn Greek.

<sup>86</sup> There is an evident mistake in this passage, a few lines up (and a few years before this event, according to the chronology of Korun), Korun had mentioned the *fifth year* of the King, since the event which had occurred at that time perhaps three, but at least two years must have passed, therefore it is safe to assume that the *fifth year* mentioned in this paragraph should be read seven, since the Armenian letters *b*=5 and *t*=7, could be easily confused.

<sup>87</sup> Aram: Strictly speaking *Aram* is Syria, but could also mean, as in this case northern Mesopotamia, and adjacent regions, which had a mixed population, where Armenians formed a formidable minority.

<sup>88</sup> Babulas and Acocius: The first name is misspelled, these two bishops are respectively, Rabula, bishop of Edessa and Acacius, bishop of Metilene; only Korun is in error about Rabula, since this latter became bishop of Edessa only in the year 411, he could not have been the bishop of that city at the time Mashtotz visited there, at that time the bishop was Pécido, (Marquard).

<sup>89</sup> Samosata: A famous city of learning in Syria, at one time it was the capital of the Kingdom of Commagene, now a small village inhabited by some Kurdish tribes.

## VIII

And he [began] with his companions (T. his equals) the prayers, the wakes and tearful supplications, the strict living, the intense lamentation, remembering the saying of the prophet that: "when you lament you live".<sup>90</sup>

And thus suffering many labors to find some means of help for his nation; he was granted from the giver of all things, the good fortune (T. the condition) of being the father of this new and wonderful invention (T. *births*), the characters of the Armenian language, [which he invented] by his holy hand;<sup>91</sup> and right there, he immediately marked down, named and classified [the invented characters], and defined (T. *invented*) the manner of spelling (T. *the syllables and ties*).

And then taking leave from the saint bishops, and taking [with him] his assistants, went down to the city of Samosata, where he was greatly honored by the bishop and the church [of the city].

And finding in that city a scribe of Greek language, by the name of Rubanus, he classified with him the characters, the thin and the thick, the short and the long, the single and the double, and [thus] he gave

<sup>90</sup> Isaiah 30:15 (Arm. version).

<sup>91</sup> This is one of the most discussed passages of Korun, and one of the most important in the whole book. Though one would expect to find more detail about the actual invention of the Armenian alphabet, unfortunately this curt and somewhat enigmatic passage is the only account of it, neither is Little Korun any help, since in it, the story of the invention is transposed verbatim from the history of book of Moses of Khoren, either by the author of Little Korun, or a later scribe; an identical account of the invention of the alphabet is to be found in the history of Lazar of Pharp, probably supplanting his original version. A deliberate effort could be detected in the substitution of the version first given by Moses of Khoren in the other two works.

Furthermore, the passage of Korun, dealing with the invention of the alphabet, has been differently understood by several scholars, we are introducing our own version, which to our way of thinking, makes better sense.

final shape [to the characters],<sup>92</sup> and completed them. [Thereafter] he turned [his attention] to translation, with two men, both his pupils, the first of whom was called John, from the region of Yekelyatz, and the other Joseph, from the house of Palanin.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Here is what Korun is trying to say in his obscure manner, is that Mashtotz, with the help of this man Rubanus, gave the final shape to the newly invented letters, since Mashtotz had already given their values, names and places in the alphabet; also Rubanus was only a calligrapher, therefore the only kind of help Mashtotz could expect from him would be in this field.

<sup>93</sup> Yekelyatz: This region is now a part of the

And first, he began to translate the proverbs of Solomon, which begins with advising to know wisdom, by saying: "To be aware of wisdom and appreciate advice, to comprehend words of intelligence."<sup>94</sup> which was written by the same scribe (i.e. Mashtotz), who at the same time was instructing young boys the art of writing.

(To be continued)

Turkish Vilayet (state) of Erzeroum, near the town of Erzinka. Palanian: the House of Palanian was probably located in Sophene, near present day Palou.

<sup>94</sup> Proverbs 1:2.

## ERRATA

Unfortunate last minute press excisions altered and distorted two verses of Mr. B. Der Bedrosian's tribute to his departed son "Pep" (see AR, Vol. XII, No. 4—48) and we are happy to offer corrections in this regard.

Stanza 3 (p. 66) should read:

*Step by step we watched your unfoldments fine,  
Your graceful stature delicate, as vine.  
Sweetness of your voice and motions of grace.  
The smiles of heaven shining on your face.*

Stanza 10 (p. 67):

*The fire of your heart and deep thinking mind,  
Tense enthusiasm and nature so kind,  
Were quickly snuffed out with our hope and dream,  
Life is bitter now and our lights are dim.*

# A HISTORY OF ARMENIA

HRAND PASDERMADJIAN

## CHAPTER VI THE DEFENSE OF CHRISTIANITY

*The history of the Armenians is a history of  
valor, energy and suffering.*

GUSTAVE SCHLUMBERGER

### Armenia Under the Domination of the Sassanids and The Battle of Avarayr (430-634)

We had brought the recitation of the history of Armenia to the time when Greater Armenia lost her independence and fell under the domination of the Sassanids of Iran.

Armenia thereafter was to know an existence of two centuries (430-634) during which period she continued to survive not as an independent state but as a number of principalities governed by the Armenian nobility representing almost autonomous states yet subject to Iranian masters.

From the very beginning of this period Armenia was obliged to wage an almost superhuman struggle for the defense of her faith.<sup>1</sup>

The Sassanids found themselves confronted with a powerful Armenian nobility (families like the Mamikonians, the Kamsarakans, the Gyunis and the Siunis, the Artzrunis and the Bagratids) each of whom held extensive lands. They lived in their castles perched on the mountains which

were almost inaccessible and maintained their own private armies. The Sassanids already had used these families and their independent and rebellious spirit against the royal throne in the weakening and the promotion of the disintegration of the Armenian kingdom. When this result was achieved and Armenia passed under the sovereignty of Iran, these princely families continued to pose as an equally dangerous power which the Sassanids were forced to take into account and which they hoped to utilize.

This is why the Sassanids were obliged to guarantee their privileges. Each of these principalities continued its existence as before. The Persians were satisfied to appoint over them a Governor General or a *Marzpan* who often was an Armenian, elected by these same families, such as Vasak Siuni, many Mamikonians and Bagratids, Philippe Siuni and others. The obligations of the Armenian princes were to recognize the sovereignty of the Sassanids and to supply the Persian king their contingents during wars (especially in his invasions against the Caucasian peoples and the Turanian tribes of Turkestan), and to pay a yearly tribute. These tributes which were paid in natural products were moderate as compared to the tribute which the Armenians paid later under Arab domination.

The great conflict which set Armenia

<sup>1</sup> The principal Armenian original sources for this period are Elysee Vardapet, *History of Vardan and the Armenian War*, and Lazar of Pharbe, *History* (Armenian historians of the Fifth Century).

and Persia at odds was a religious war. The Sassanid Iran was no longer the Parthian Iran which was more tolerant of religion and which was related to Armenia with royal family bonds such as the Arsacid Dynasty. The Sassanian Iran had reverted to the ancient religion of Iran—Mazdaism or Zoroastrianism—with its worship of fire, light and the sun, and with its clergy which consisted of the Magi. The Sassanids became the fanatical disseminators of this religion. They wanted to force this faith on all the regions which belonged to them with the exception of Armenia where they met with a fierce resistance which they could not subdue.

Indeed, in 449 the Sassanid king Yezdigert II issued an edict ordering all the Christians in his realm to become fire worshippers. This was the signal of a terrible revolt in Armenia where the people rose up in arms under the leadership of Vardan Mamikonian, a scion of one of the most influential princely families in the land who had served as general in Byzantine armies in the days of Emperor Theodosius II. In 450 the Armenian bishops held a conclave in the City of Aschtishat where they drafted an apologetic letter to King Yezdigert declaring their unflinching loyalty to their Christian faith.

The Iranians were expelled from the land, their garrisons were assailed, their Magi were massacred and their temples were destroyed while the Armenian people armed themselves to resist the Sassanid counterblow which was not late in coming.

In this national revolt which rallied the entire people there were a few noblemen who turned traitors. Fearing the vengeance of the Sassanids, and desirous of preserving their possessions and their privileges, they took refuge in Iran expressing their loyalty to the Sassanids.

In the spring of 451 the Persian army entered Armenia and, on May 26, clashed

with the Armenian forces under the command of Vardan Mamikonian at the Plain of Avarayr. The chroniclers of the time have placed the Persian army at 200,000, and the Armenian forces at 60,000. Both of these figures are, of course, greatly exaggerated, but it is beyond doubt that the King's army had an overwhelming numerical superiority.<sup>2</sup>

The Armenian army fulfilled its duty heroically and fought to the end in the face of constant enemy replenishments. Vardan Mamikonian, together with eight of his generals and one third of his force went down with honor on the battlefield.

The Armenians celebrate the memory of their fallen martyrs each year at the anniversary of this battle which represents one of the glorious pages of Armenian's history. The memory of the heroes of Avarayr has sustained the Armenians for centuries of trials and disappointments. It is the symbol of the will and the aspirations of a crushed yet not finally defeated people. In effect, this battle saved the nation. Although victorious, the Persians, greatly shaken, stopped to repair their losses. And since, soon after, they were forced to concentrate the bulk of their armies on the borders of Turkestan to face the inroads of the Huns, they relinquished their plan of forcibly converting Armenia to Mazdaism.

But during the reign of King Firouz (488-491), the successor of Yezdigert, the religious persecutions were resumed. Vahan Mamikonian, the nephew of the hero of Avarayr, headed the Armenian people and continued the struggle, supported by the Iberians (Georgians) who likewise

<sup>2</sup> Clearly all the figures pertaining to armies supplied by Medieval chroniclers are greatly exaggerated. As a matter of fact, in a mountainous country like Armenia where armies were forced to negotiate difficult passes, it was impossible to concentrate on a plain more than 20 to 30 thousand soldiers.



were determined to defend the cause of Christianity.

In the long struggle the Armenians successfully resisted the Persian forces.<sup>3</sup> The hostilities lasted until the death of Firouz (Perose) and his successor Valarces (488-491) relinquished the idea of the forcible conversion of Armenia. He appointed Vahan Mamikonian Marzpan (Governor General) of Armenia and accepted the Armenian terms pertaining to the autonomy of the country, religious freedom and the removal of the fire temples.

Having forced upon Persia a new policy, and having defended her religion through her valor, Armenia thereafter enjoyed a state of quasi independence.<sup>4</sup>

In the Fifth and Sixth centuries Armenia, or the principalities which represented her, to be precise, found themselves in a difficult situation as a result of the wars between Persia and Byzantium which often were fought on her soil. This was the case particularly during the great campaigns of emperors Maurice and Heraclius. Armenia knew periods of autonomy as well as periods of great trial. Indeed, the position of Armenia between Byzantium and Sassanid Persia was far more complex than appears at first glance. But one should take account of the fact that the secession of the Armenian church from the Byzantine church had opened a rift between Armenia and the Eastern Empire, while the Sassanids, the traditional enemies of Byzantium, had made it a principle to defend the faith of Christian dissidents.<sup>5</sup>

One should also consider the basic antagonism which could not fail to exist between the eminently feudalistic Armenian society and the bureaucratic and mod-

ern state of Byzantium. Indeed, the Armenian principalities, from time to time, turned to one side or the other. Moreover, there were real attempts to destroy the Armenian nation, such as the attempt of Emperor Maurice. But Armenian valor triumphed over all these trials. In the course of time both adversaries realized that they could not very well dismiss the Armenian support and that the task of subduing these hardy mountaineers was beyond their powers. Indeed, the Mamikonian family at one time even succeeded in recovering its complete independence.<sup>6</sup>

Thus, during this period, as the external marks of her national character, Armenia continued to preserve her language, her autonomous nobility, her private military contingents, and lastly, most important of all, her Christian religion.

The blooming of Armenian architecture during the Fifth and the Sixth centuries and the contribution of Armenia to the creation of Christian arts of the period to which we shall revert later, go to prove that Armenia, despite her transitory difficulties, managed to preserve her national life and to give free course to the expression of her individual genius.

By virtue of her position Armenia had become a point of contact between Byzantine and Sassanid civilizations, and in all probability, in a number of areas, such as architecture, she played the role of a crucible which welded together certain facets of these two differing cultures.

### The Separation of the Armenian Church And Its Consequences

The separation of the Armenian Church took place in the Fifth century, much earlier than the separation of the Catholic and Greek Orthodox (Greek schism) churches

<sup>3</sup> Kevork Aslan, *Etudes historiques sur le peuple Arménienne*, Paris, 1928, p. 248.

<sup>4</sup> Percy Sykes, *A History of Persia*, London, 1915, Vol. I, page 474.

<sup>5</sup> F. W. Bussel, *Essays on the Constitutional History of the Roman Empire*, London, 1910, II, pp. 338-339.

<sup>6</sup> On this subject see Jean Le Mamikonian, *Histoire de Taron*, translation of Langlois, Paris, 1869.

in the Eleventh century.

It is known that the early centuries of Christianity were marked by the birth and the propagation of differing views in regard to the nature of Christ. It was inevitable that the Armenian Church, one of the oldest churches and a contemporary of these controversies and conflicts, should take its own stand on the subject.

Of these varying doctrines the chief were Arianism which saw in Christ the perfect personality but denied his deity; Nestorianism which considered Christ a deified man, and Monophysism which professed the union of the divine and the human in the nature of Christ.

The churches of Rome and Byzantium in the Council of Nicea (325) had condemned Arianism, declaring that Christ was of the nature of God. The Armenian Church accepted this doctrine, and later Monophysism which was the direct product and reinforcement of the former.

Later, when Rome and Byzantium in the Council of Chalcedon (451) adopted a new doctrine, namely the doctrine of Leo the Great which professed to see in Christ two different natures—one human and one divine—closely united but not merged, the Armenian Church, faithful to Monophysism, seceded from the Roman and Byzantine churches. The final separation took place in 491.

In this stand of the Armenian Church should be seen first its attachment to tradition and to original belief. Considering itself the Apostolic church having derived directly from the apostles and not an episcopalian church,<sup>7</sup> it thought these successive religious councils of the Fourth and Fifth centuries which perpetually subjected the Christian doctrine to new changes were not compatible with the dignity of the Christian religion. For this reason the Ar-

menian Church adopted a conservative attitude, rejecting each new doctrinal additions as well as any new initiative which, in its opinion, served to alter the pristine faith.

It also should be stated that all these controversies and conflicts did not pertain wholly to matters of theology but they also pursued material interests. They represented a struggle for influence among four patriarchs, the four metropolitans of the Christian world—Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople. Alexandria, proud of the important role its theologians and writers had played in the drafting of the Christian doctrine, thought it was its right to settle the dogmatic truth while Rome and Constantinople could not tolerate this supremacy.

The Armenian Church kept out of these quarrels. Whenever she sought inspiration she turned to Jerusalem and Antioch, the cradle of Christianity. Thus, in the Fourth century, Armenia turned to Bishop Macarius of Jerusalem for advice in matters of church organization. Besides, there already were many Armenian monasteries on the Mount of Olives as early as the Fifth century.<sup>8</sup>

Independently of the warm attachment which the Armenian people showed toward primitive Christianity, their separation from the Byzantine Church, if not the direct result of political factors, was nevertheless perpetuated because of them.

Indeed, as against Byzantium which fast turned the Eastern Church into a docile tool of its policy, the independence of the Armenian Church became one of the factors of the survival of the Armenian people as a separate entity which was not swallowed up by Byzantium.

As a consequence of the creation of an

<sup>7</sup> M. Ormanian, *L'Eglise arménienne*, Paris, 1910, pp. 11-13.

<sup>8</sup> To this day the Armenian Church is a joint owner of the Holy Sepulchre together with the Catholic, Orthodox and Coptic churches.

independent Armenian Church the Armenians were left without a firm support in the West. Byzantium, and then Rome constantly reproached Armenia for her religious secession. Undoubtedly there were times when, either Byzantium or the Vatican (for instance at the time of the Crusades) defended Armenia, but these aids or alliances were made especially from political considerations, because in certain regions their political interests coincided, and not from religious motives.

It is a known fact that both the Orthodox and Catholic churches showed a tendency to appear more liberal toward other religions or to pagans than toward those whom they considered heretics, namely, Christians who belonged to other denominations. Byzantium in particular which became the unworthy heir of the far more tolerant Roman Empire, proved infinitely bigotted. The hatred which she bore toward Armenia because of her faith drove her to many insensate acts by opening her eastern gates before the foreign invaders, by weakening the Bagratid Kingdom, by her division of Armenia in the Fifth century, by her hostility to the newly-created Armenian state of Cilicia and the Crusaders, and by her religious persecutions in the Armenian provinces of the Byzantine Empire.

But if the existence of an independent church impelled the West to deny Armenia its aid in her struggle, nevertheless, despite everything else, Armenia owes her survival and her regeneration to her church. It was due to their fanatical devotion to this church that the Armenians succeeded in preserving their faith. The church not only did not weaken them, but it became their strength. The church became identified with the people and the nation. Without it, the Armenians long since would have been absorbed by Byzantium.

As Macler observes, this obstinacy of the

Armenians to preserve and to defend the national church perhaps left them without friends but it insured their political survival. Under the domination of the Sassanids, and later the Arabs, the independence of the Armenian Church from the Byzantine Church contributed as much as the Armenian resistance in compelling the fire-worshippers, and later the Moslem Arabs, to abandon their idea of converting the Armenians to their religion.

Finally it is pertinent to mention here that Armenia gave birth to a religious sect which has disappeared, the sect known as the Paulicians who might be considered a remote vanguard of the Protestant Reformation which was to take place later. This sect came into existence in the seventh century in Asia Minor which at the time was under Byzantine domination. The Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople, as well as the Armenian Church, waged a fierce war against them, and the Byzantine emperors later exiled many of them to Thrace and Macedonia where they spread their faith among the Bulgars and the Yugoslavs winning over many converts. It was this latter who inspired the Yugoslavs of Bogomils who, in turn, influenced the Albigenses of Languedoc and the Hussites of Czechoslovakia.<sup>9</sup>

### Islam and the Arab Empire

In the seventh century an event took place which was to change the face of the East and would deeply affect the life of the peoples who lived there including the Armenians. That was the birth of Islam and the creation of the Arab Empire.

Since the Arab power was to play a dominant role in the East for several centuries and since Armenia was to become directly involved with it, first falling under its domination, and later through its

<sup>9</sup> See Arnold Toynbee, *A Summary of Armenian History*, London, 1916, pp. 607-608.

protectorate the emergence of the new Armenian state under the Bagratid Dynasty, and lastly the Crusades and the period of the Cilician state, it is important to delineate the main traits of this new power.

When Mohammed started his great work the Arabs were living in the poorest part of the Middle East which was Arabia proper. The Sassanids, who had tried in vain to force their religion of fire worship on the Armenians, ruled over Iran, a part of Armenia, and Mesopotamia. The remainder of the East (Asia Minor, a part of Armenia, Syria, Palestine and Egypt) were under Byzantine rule. It should be noted that, during this period, Syria, Palestine and Egypt were inhabited in large part by Christian peoples, followers of the Monophysist doctrine (The Jacobite Church in Syria and the Coptic Church in Egypt), and the Byzantine Church was fighting them as heretics.

When Mohammed died (632) the Arabs had not yet effected the complete unification of Arabia. His successors, the first Caliph Abu-Bekir, and the second Caliph Omar were the true organizers of the victory.

During the caliphates of Abu-Bekir and Omar the Arabs succeeded in conquering the whole of the East, thanks to the favorable circumstances. The Sassanids had been weakened by the long wars of Emperor Heraclius against King Chosroes II of Persia, the Monophysite Christians of Syria and Egypt were resentful of Byzantine persecutions, and lastly, the religion of Mazdaism in Persia had been weakened by the doctrine of Mani.

The Byzantine and Sassanid armies were shattered by the "scientifically-directed fanaticism" represented by the Arab forces. As a result of the decisive battle of Yarmouk, fought in 634 near Jordan, the Byzantine Empire lost Syria, Palestine and

Egypt which the Arabs occupied between 634 and 642. Meanwhile they attempted the conquest of Persia, after they had defeated the best Sassanid General Rustam at the Battle of Kadessia in 637. By 642 the conquest of Persia was ended. In following years (643-708) the Arabs conquered the whole of North Africa, and finally, in 711, they invaded Spain. But before long this lightning advance of the Arabs came to a standstill, when, in the words of Pirenne, "the walls of Constantinople in 717 on the one hand, and the soldiers of Charles Martel in 732 on the other hand, smashed this encircling great offensive on the two flanks of Christianity."

From 661 to 750 the center of gravity of the Arab world was moved to Damascus where was established the new Ommiad Dynasty of the Caliphate. Under the Ommiads the Arab rule was extended to Turkestan, North Africa and a part of Spain. In 750 the Arab center was moved to Bagdad with the establishment of the Abbasid Dynasty. Under the Abbasids the Arab Empire reached the pinnacle of its glory, but it also marked the period of its decline. The Bagdad of Haroun-el-Rashid the Just rivaled Byzantium in its riches.

The world witnessed the blooming of an Arab civilization which sprouted in Bagdad, Cordova and Salerno, a superb intellectualism, a civilization whose luster was matchless, but whose main springs should not be overlooked. Thus, the Ommiads became the heirs of partly the Byzantine, and partly Syrian ancient civilizations. As to the Abbasids, it should not be forgotten that the Persian world had an imposing, and at times a preponderant influence on the history of the Bagdad Caliphate.<sup>10</sup>

But the Arab empire, now too extended, before long was subjected to a process of

<sup>10</sup>See Renan, *De la part des peuples semitiques dans l'Histoire de la Civilisation*. Paris, 1875, p. 22.

dismemberment. The Abbasids gradually lost Spain, North Africa and Egypt where the local Emirs asserted their independence, and, even in Cordova and Cairo established their own Caliphates.

All the same, the Caliphate of Bagdad still maintained a great empire, despite a disastrous attempt to capture Constantinople and the reconquest of Asia Minor by Byzantium.

The cause of the disintegration of the Arab empire were the Turanians. Having come from Turkestan in the ninth century, these Turanian Turks had settled in small companies in Persia and had entered the service of the Caliph of Bagdad as his body guards. Presently, they began to terrorize the Arabs and the Caliphate. The history of the magnificent palace of Bagdad became the history of the palace intrigues and the murders of these guards and their chiefs. Thus, the Caliphate of Bagdad was completely subordinated to the misfortunes, Bagdad was captured and sacked and Mesopotamia was annihilated by the Mongols. The Mongol invasion had limitless consequences, not so much by the pillage of Bagdad, as the destruction of the irrigation network which for thousands of years had converted Mesopotamia into a rich garden—a disaster from which she never recovered.

Later, when the Ottoman Turks having destroyed the Byzantine Empire conquered the Balkans and Asia Minor, all the Arab lands fell under their domination in the fifteenth century.

### **The Arab Campaigns Against Armenia (639-654)**

Let us now return to the history of the Armenians at the end of the Sassanid rule. We have seen that Armenia, or rather the Armenian principalities under the nobility, had created an administration by which

they had been able to preserve their autonomy and their religion.

The Arabs, after their lightning conquest of Persia, turned their face to Armenia. Here they were met with such a serious resistance which was quite different from the resistance which they had encountered in the countries which they hitherto had conquered, countries which had fallen under their blows like so many castles of straw.

Arab historians (Beladhori, Tabari, Yakut) are in agreement with the Armenian chroniclers (Sebeos and Leontes)<sup>11</sup> in regard to the ferocity of the Armenian resistance to the Arab invasion. The invasions of 640 and 642 were repulsed by the Armenians victoriously, ending in bloody failure.<sup>12</sup> The commander of the Armenian forces was Theodorus Rushtuni, a great general who had distinguished himself in the service of Byzantium.

About 645, now the masters of Persia, following the Plain of Araxes the Arabs succeeded in pushing the war into the heart of Armenia. Before long they seized the plains of Araxes and Euphrates, but the resistance continued successfully in the higher regions around the fortresses on the mountains. In the face of this stubborn resistance the Arabs now were inclined to sign a treaty. The Armenians, on their part, had been bitterly disappointed by Byzantium's passive attitude which, in this decisive struggle had extended only a token assistance. The negotiations between Rushtuni and the Arabs resulted in following agreement. The Arabs recognized the autonomy of the Armenian principalities and in return the Armenians would recognize the Arab sovereignty on the same terms which formerly were exercised by the Persians. The Arabs appointed Theodorus Rushtuni

<sup>11</sup> The Armenian form of Leontes is Ghevond.

<sup>12</sup> Streck, *Armenien, Enzyklopedie des Islams*, Vol. I., Leipzig, 1908.



Governor General of Armenia. As in the Sassanid period, the Armenians were bound to supply the Arabs contingents of the famous Armenian cavalry to fight beside them in time of war.

Following is the copy of the treaty which the Arab Caliph presented in a letter: "This is the treaty between me and you for as long as you wish to keep it. For three years I shall not impose taxes on you. Then you shall give me as much as you like. Then you shall keep in the land a cavalry force of 15,000 which you will add to the tribute which you will pay me. I will not call on this cavalry to serve in Syria (meaning, he would not use this force against Byzantium) but it shall serve everywhere else where I see the need. Neither will I send Emirs into your fortresses, nor Arab officers nor a single horseman. If the Greeks march against you I will send you as much aid as you ask. I swear by the name of God that I am sincere."<sup>13</sup>

This treaty caused a great disillusionment in Byzantium which had become incapable of defending herself. Her armies had been put to flight by the onslaught of the Arab armies, and they had hoped that the Armenian resistance would preoccupy important Arab forces. But the Armenians had no intention of sacrificing themselves in order to defend a great empire which now was incapable of defending itself.

The struggle of Armenia against the Arabs, their fierce resistance at a time when all other peoples of the Middle East proved incapable of defending themselves, constitutes one of the brightest pages of Armenian history. This is how Sedillot appraises this supreme achievement in his *History of the Arabs*: "Following their conquest of Mesopotamia, the Arabs invaded Armenia. But in this land of towering mountains they encountered a proud

and militant people which had always maintained a sort of independence toward its powerful neighbors. Inured to self-defense, the Armenians valiantly met the onslaught of Mohammed's followers, and perhaps, with a little more unity, they could have repulsed them."<sup>14</sup>

### Armenia Under Arab Rule (654-859)

Armenia remained under Arab domination for two centuries. The Arabs respected the autonomy of Armenian principalities to a certain extent. Having met with a fierce resistance in their attempt to enslave them, the Arabs relinquished their idea of the final conquest of Armenia. As a matter of fact Byzantium often interfered and occupied Armenia many times.

But, alongside these princely families which preserved their autonomy, there were the valleys of the Araxes and the Euphrates with their accessible cities and plains. The Arabs gradually established there their functionaries and their garrisons, centered particularly in the cities of Tovin, Nakhitchevan, Erzeroum and Kandja (Gandzak). They imposed on those regions a rule of harsh servitude. The land was crushed under the weight of heavy taxes, something which the Arabs exacted from all the peoples under their domination. Many times they tried to force the religion of Islam on the Armenians but neither the persecutions nor the promises could sway them from their loyalty to their religion which by now had become the symbol of their survival.

To destroy Christianity in Armenia it would be necessary to exterminate the entire Armenian population. This might have been possible, if not in the principalities which were defended by the mountains, in the cities of the plains of the Araxes and

<sup>13</sup> Sebeos, *History of Heraclius*, translated by Macler, Paris, 1904, p. 133.

<sup>14</sup> L. Sedillot, *Histoire des Arabes*, Paris, 1854, p. 113.

the Euphrates. But it must be said to the credit of the Arabs that, whatever their rule might have imposed, after the first period of their fanaticism, they manifested a considerable degree of religious tolerance in all the territories which they had occupied.

The center of their government in Armenia was the City of Tovin where they kept a governor-general (Vostikan, or Emir) and a garrison force of five thousand.

The first Vostikan (Governor General), as we have seen, was General Theodorus Rushtouni. The second and the third were again Armenians—the Mamikonians. They were succeeded by Arabs, but these again had beside them a representative of the Armenian nobility who carried the title of Generalissimo and who was the commander of an Armenian feudal army of 15,000 which defended the country against external attack or fought beside the Arabs. These Armenian generalissimos meanwhile served as liason between the Arabs and the Armenian princely families. They were generally chosen from the Mamikonians, the Bagratids and the Arzrunis.

In fact, the history of Armenia during the two centuries of Arab domination is the history of the Armenian princely families. Laurent has given the details in his book.<sup>15</sup>

The Arabs wavered among the dangers which these autonomous princes could present to their rule with their warlike people and their rebellious nobility ("seeing such brave warriors entrenched so far away from the court made one ponder," thought a number of Caliphs)<sup>16</sup> and those services which these princes offered them.

First of all they supplied the Arab empire a precious cavalry force of 15,000 which had distinguished itself in their

ranks so often. On the other hand, like the Romans, the Arabs recognized the role of the Armenians as a buffer between themselves and the rebellious peoples of the Transcaucasus (the Georgians and the Albans). Besides, ever since the sixth century the north Caucasus was occupied by a Turanian tribe, a barbarian and savage people called the Kazars who struck terror into the hearts of the Arabs as well as the other peoples of the Transcaucasus. They crossed the Caucasus periodically and pillaged the Transcaucasian plain, sometimes as far as Armenia. These raids were often incited by Byzantium in an effort to weaken the Arabs, much the same as they anciently used the Turanian Turks to weaken Sassanid Persia. To fight against this scourge and to defend the Transcaucasus the Arabs had need of the Armenian forces.

As regards Byzantium, an Armenia which was capable of defending herself represented in the eyes of the Arabs a useful and none too negligible a factor.

Later, when the Arab empire began to disintegrate, the Caliphs of Baghdad felt the need of the Armenians' aid even against their own satraps. Indeed, the Mohammedan Emirs, neighbors of neighboring states such as the Emirs of Persian Azerbaijan and Kurdistan, showed growing signs of rebellion against the central government the Caliphs of Baghdad were not unhappy to use against them the Armenian warlike nobility.<sup>17</sup>

Lastly, the Caliphs found it advantageous in this country which was populated by Christians to utilize the services of the Armenian princes, much the same as they used the Emirs in Moslem countries, as tax collectors and military agents.

In fact, relations between the Armenian princely families and the Arabs were

<sup>15</sup> J. Laurent, *L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'Islam*, Paris, 1919.

<sup>16</sup> J. Laurent, p. 154.

<sup>17</sup> W. Allen, *History of the Georgian People*, London, 1932, p. 79.

susceptible to changes as determined by the policies of the Caliphs, the personalities of the governor-generals and the general political situation. Countless times the Armenian princes took up arms against the Arabs when the latter's representatives reverted to a policy of religious persecution, oppression, and insufferable taxation.

In the course of the greater part of these revolts the Armenian princes temporarily succeeded in expelling the Arabs from their occupied positions in the great plains. But each time the Arabs, sending large armies, or through a policy of divide and conquer (inciting the princes one against the other) succeeded in the end in reconquering the big plains.

Chief among these revolts were the following. The revolt of 697-705 which was led by Sumbat the Bagratid who at the Battle of Vardanagert annihilated the Arab garrison of Nakhitchevan, a force of 8000 which had marched against him.<sup>18</sup> With the aid of Byzantium, Sumbat liberated the greater part of Armenia. But the Arabs finally assembled a large army under the command of Muhammed and reoccupied Armenia, at least her principal cities, followed by some terrible persecutions. Nakhitchevan was drenched in blood. Under the pretext of taking a population census, the Arabs assembled in the city church a large number of Armenian nobles together with their families (altogether 800) and massacred them in 705.

Under the Governor-General Merwan Armenia enjoyed a tolerable administration, but after him a veritable reign of terror was started under the Vosdikans Suleyman, Bekir and Hassan (766-778). The Armenians again revolted under the leadership of Mushegh Mamikonian who, at the head of a contingent of 5,000 crushed an

Arab cavalry force of 4,000, the garrison of Tovin which had marched against him.<sup>19</sup> After this victory Mushegh Mamikonian occupied central Armenia. The Arabs sent against him an army of 40,000. Mushegh was defeated after a heroic resistance. He fell on the battle field fighting. Thereupon the Arabs unleashed in Armenia another reign of terror. They dismembered the Mamikonian princely family in the interests of the other princes.

In the beginning of the ninth century the Arabs, weakened by now, and the disintegration of their empire having begun, meanwhile compelled to restrain the serious Persian revolts, sent to Armenia (818-836) an excellent governor-general named Haul who, like Merwan of a century before, won the confidence of the Armenians. This happened after the reign of Haroun-Reschid the Just. The court of Baghdad was swimming in opulence and this material prosperity led them to adopt a more liberal policy.

As Laurent has observed, "The Armenian power and the bravery (meaning the princely families) was not enough to convert their autonomy into a united force. The Armenians never united their forces and their will power into a concerted common action."<sup>20</sup>

Indeed, these revolts of the Armenian princely families never took the form of a grand, co-ordinated movement, but were successive ventures. The Arabs, once having re-occupied the plains, could not easily march against the mountainous regions to give the rebels the coup de grace. In such cases they raised another princely family against the rebellious prince, promising him the latter's estates in reward for his co-operation.

It was thus that the Arabs, relying chiefly upon two high ranking houses of

<sup>18</sup> Ghevond, *History of the Wars and the Conquests of the Arabs in Armenia*, Tchamazarian translation, Paris, 1856, p. 23.

<sup>19</sup> Ghevond, p. 133.

<sup>20</sup> Laurent, p. 2.

the nobility—the Bagratids and the Arzunis—liquidated the power of the Mamikonians, the Kamsarakans, the Rushtunis and the Gnounis.

### Armenia Between the Arab and Byzantine Empires

During these two centuries, despite the presence of Arab garrison in the plains, as well as those changes which the Arabs introduced into the number and the form of Armenian principalities, Armenia nevertheless managed to preserve her autonomous princedoms and thus avoid total enslavement.

The Armenians achieved these results because, despite their serious setbacks in their attempts to expel the Arab government and its garrison from the land, they were able to keep up the resistance in the mountainous regions. Second, because the proximity of Byzantium and the menace which she posed precluded the possibility of waging a long continuous war (the way the Russians waged in the nineteenth century in north Caucasus), the only thing which could smash the Armenian autonomous princedoms being the successive occupation of their resistance centers in their mountain strongholds.

As to Byzantium, she too, in turn, tried to penetrate Armenia and even succeeded once in occupying a part of the land in the course of a series of uprisings. But the Armenians appealed to Byzantine aid only in extreme circumstances and they always resisted the occupation of their land by Byzantine armies.

The religious antagonism between Armenia and Byzantium, the distrust of the Armenian nobility as based on the fact that the Arabs had guaranteed the preservation of the feudal regime while Byzantium, with her centralized administration, threatened to destroy it, and lastly, the imperial-

istic designs of Byzantium, prevented the Armenians from full union and permanent co-operation with the latter.

The Arabs, with their inborn intellectual finesse, soon grasped this fact and they recognized the autonomy of the Armenian princedoms despite their wars and revolts, as well as the Byzantine aid they obtained, against their supremacy.

This period of Armenian history which finds the country between the Arab and Byzantine pincers is analogous to the preceding period when Armenia was being squeezed between Rome and the Parthians.

Laurent epitomizes this situation best in his excellent work dedicated to this period in following words:

"Situating between the Arab and Byzantine empires, Armenia occupied an extraordinary and remote position in which the rival powers could have entry only if the land's warlike people, well armed and zealous to defend its autonomy, had not utilized its inaccessible mountain fastnesses and its walled strongholds. The Arabs were never able to break Armenia's power. Before attempting such a task, they always took into account the steadily growing weakness of their government and were forced to counteract the Greek menace or their successes. And to prevent driving the Armenians into the arms of the Byzantines, they were forced to offer them peace and new concessions. Byzantium in her turn was forced to forget her ancient grudges every time the Arabs threatened to annihilate the Armenians, because the presence of Armenia retarded the Moslem menace from Constantinople, should the Arabs penetrate as far as the Black Sea coast. Thus, their private interests forced Byzantium and the Arabs to prolong the survival of a people whom they found turbulent and restive, but whose material aid and warlike activity neither could ignore. Between the Arabs and Byzantium Armenia

became the victim of a struggle, herself being partly the cause. She suffered the blows of both but she also profited from their rivalry for a long time, playing them against each other to avoid complete enslavement from one or the other."<sup>21</sup>

Thus, thanks to the rivalry of the two neighboring powers, as well as the militant spirit of her nobility and the valor of her mountaineers, the Armenian people was enabled to preserve their autonomy and their institutions.

Yet this same nobility, with its strong individualism and its tendency to subordinate common interests to their own private interests, became the chief obstacle to the transformation of their autonomy into complete independence. It prevented the co-ordination of Armenian forces into a united movement.

None of the Armenian revolts of the eighth century managed to muster an army of 40,000 which Armenia could easily have raised. They put into the field only forces which numbered five to ten thousand, because the princedoms never co-ordinated their efforts but fought against the Arabs successively and in different periods.

The history of this period may be summed up in the words of Muylberman: "It is the deeds of great princely families like the Mamikonians, the Arzrunis and the Rushtunis that fill the annals of Armenian feudalism. All of them famous, ever so powerful, became a power for the country through their loyalty to national institutions, and at the same time a weakness through their ambitious rivalries."<sup>22</sup>

### Military Aspects

In this section we will explore the military aspects of Armenia's history, not only during the four centuries of Persian and

Arab dominations, but also during the last two centuries of the reign of the Arsacids. From the military viewpoint the last two centuries of the Arsacids in Armenia (Third and fourth centuries) were characterized by the imbalance which came about between the forces of Iran and Rome.

Indeed, the Sassanids represented an infinitely more dangerous power than the Parthians. Having conserved an excellent cavalry with the reputation of the Parthians, they succeeded in organizing a professional army, improving the quality of the Persian infantry which had always been a weak point of the Parthians, and to create what the Parthians were never able to attain, namely, a siege army that was suited to attack and storm fortresses. As a result, the position of great fortresses (such as Nisibis) which the Romans had built on the Euphrates frontier, partly lost their value.

It might truthfully be said that, the Romans, having warred against the Persians for long years, had trained them in the most scientific parts of the art of warfare, something which had been their weakness right along. The Romans should have pondered Lycurgus' advice to the Spartans: "Do not wage long wars against the same people lest you teach them the art of fighting."

But the Roman army itself no longer was what it used to be. The eastern legions were gradually replenished more and more by soldiers from Syria and Palestine. These recruits, although formidable in pursuit, they nevertheless were of little use in actual fighting, whereas the Roman army always fought in accordance with the classical method. Under the circumstances, it was inevitable that the balance of power between the Romans and the Sassanids should tip in favor of the latter.

Later, under the impulse of Islam, the Arabs represented a power which seemed

<sup>21</sup> Laurent, pp. 1-2.

<sup>22</sup> J. Muylberman, *The Arab Domination of Armenia*, Paris, 1927, p. 143.



irresistible by virtue of its inspiration by a scientifically directed fanaticism. The lightning conquest of the east by small Arab armies (estimated at five to ten thousand) constitutes one of the most extraordinary events of history.

It should be noted, however, that, beginning with the second half of the eighth century, the Arab armies which were sent into Armenia and whom the Armenians fought during their last revolt included a diminishing number of Arab soldiers, and before long they consisted wholly of Turkish mercenaries in the service of the Caliphs.

As to the Armenians, during this entire period they were worthy of their old military traditions. Whether in the third century wars when they fought beside the Romans against the Sassanids, or in the fourth century wars when the kingdom of Armenia, single handed, was forced to resist the Sassanid power, or during the resistance to the Arab invasions of the seventh century, and lastly, during the revolts against the Arab rule in the eighth century, the Armenian armies continued to maintain the high military prestige which they had inherited from their ancestors.

It is now time to give a few details in regard to the Armenian military institution as it prevailed during the Middle Ages.<sup>23</sup>

The basis of the Armenian military institution—the fighting core—consisted of a feudal army. It derived from the social order of Armenia which we shall have occasion to describe in a future chapter. In Armenian society the rights belonged only to those who were privileged to be a part of the feudal army, and conversely, only those who formed a part of the feudal army had the right to be hereditary owners of land. Each *Baron* or *Nakharar* (Head of princely family), each chief or the owner of a region had his small feudal army con-

sisting exclusively of freemen (*Azatani*) who were his tributaries. In time of war and often during maneuvers they assembled under the banner of their respective *Nakharars*. All these warriors were horsemen, but in case of necessity they also fought on foot (in high mountains or behind trenches). Each Baron or *Nakharar* had at his disposal a contingent of hundreds of men.

The grand nobility (Princes, or the *Ishkhans*) controlled entire provinces and the Barons and the *Nakharars* were their tributaries. The totality of the contingents of all the *Nakharars* subject to the prince constituted the army. This represented a force of several thousands.

The Armenian feudal army represented a force of approximately 15,000, a figure which was stationary for many centuries.

This nobility was famous for its fighting qualities and its constant military training. They were armored from head to foot, so were their horses. They spent their entire time in military drills and they reluctantly parted with their weapons. Whether on horseback or on foot, they used their arms with great skill. They practiced all kinds of military games, especially cricket. In their circle one could attain to fame only by his handsomeness and his physical prowess. The stature and the physical power are qualities which the contemporary Armenian chroniclers never cease to eulogize. For the Armenians, the ideal soldier should be able to sever an enemy in two, helmet, armour and all, with one stroke of the sword. The chroniclers cite many examples of such feats.<sup>24</sup>

Aside from this army which, if not a standing force, at least served the purpose of a reserve force, in case of necessity, there was the mobilization of the peasants and the city militias, when, for instance, the country was called upon to defend itself against some major invasion or to un-

<sup>23</sup> Laurent, Chapter III.

<sup>24</sup> Laurent, pp. 53-55.

leash some major rebellion. This composite force of peasants and city folk generally numbered 25,000, raising the total of the Armenian army to 40,000.

This was the number of the armies which faced the Sassanids in the great national wars of the fourth and fifth centuries, and later the Arabs in the latter half of the seventh century. This number was relatively smaller than what the Sassanids and the Arabs could muster from their inexhaustible human supply.

Besides, beginning with the eighth century, the total of the Armenian forces seldom reached this figure, because the greater part of the wars against the Arabs lacked the nature of a major war which called for a national effort. They were local wars involving some Armenian principedom, while the average force of each prince seldom passed the figure of 5,000, namely, a fraction of the total force.<sup>25</sup>

Another weakness of Armenia which came to light during the last centuries of the Arsacid dynasty consisted of the fact that, alongside the feudal army, the country did not have a professional army in the service of the king as was the case at the time of Tigranes the Great. Such a regular army, supplemented by the feudal regiments, was necessary in the kingdom, to insure the king's authority in times of peace and to fight in times of war. The power of the Ottoman Turks in the latter part of the middle ages and the turn of the modern age consisted of the fact that, alongside the feudal army, they had a small standing force of professional fighters who were called the Janissaries which, with its discipline and fighting quality, laid the foundation of their power.

When the kingdom of Armenia came to an end it was natural that the Armenians no longer could creat a standing army at

the disposal of a king. Yet the unification of the feudal forces against their invaders, or to expel the foreign tyrants from the land, represented no negligible force. Unfortunately, such a collective effort seldom became a reality. More often, the Armenian princes or the Nakharars who governed the provinces were raised one against another and were skilfully divided by the Persians and later by the Arabs. They fought isolated wars, rising against the enemy one after another, without co-ordinating and consolidating their effort.

If in this unequal contest the Armenians did not completely disappear, they owe it to their fighting qualities, to the mountainous structure of Armenia and to the innate, constructive talent of the people. This latter quality was a great asset in the defense of the country. Assuredly, the period of IV to VIII centuries is the period in which, in the religious field, the Armenian architecture experienced a magnificent development, making a great contribution to Christian art, something to which we shall revert at the close of this chapter.

But alongside the religious architecture, the military architecture alike which in a country like Armenia was confused with civil architecture, was producing its masterpieces—strong fortresses perched on the mountains, and castles, the residence of the nobility—which represented a powerful network of defense, sprawled all over the country.

An example of such structures is the Fortress of Voghakan, the residence of the Mamikonians which rose above the plain of Moush. Besides its walls and turrets, the fortress included long, subterranean tunnels, dug into the rocks, which reached as far as the banks of the neighboring river, to enable the besieged to have water supply in time of siege. Other tunnels reaching the end of neighboring forests enabled free communication with the outside world.

<sup>25</sup> Laurent, p. 55.

It should also be noted that during the last wars of independent Armenia waged against the Persians in the fourth century, the Armenian armies included small special units of trained soldiers who were called cliff climbers. "To these men," writes Raffi, "was committed the task of leading the attack on fortifications built on high cliffs. These soldiers were daring climbers all of whom had lived and grown up in the mountains, and since their infancy they were inured to climb the high mountains like lizards. They also were used for climbing fortress walls. They climbed these walls with the aid of strong iron hooks. Against the shower of arrows from the defenders of the walls they were protected by broad, umbrella-shaped brass shields, tied to their shoulders."<sup>26</sup>

During this entire period the fighting qualities of the Armenians remained impeccable. They demonstrated these qualities not only in the wars which they waged against the foreign invaders but also in their service in foreign armies.

The Sassanids used the Armenian feudal army against the restless peoples of the north, as well as against the Turanian tribes of Turkestan who were a perpetual threat to northern Persia. The same was done by Byzantium. When, for instance, in the sixth century Emperor Maurice, following an uprising, occupied the northern part of Armenia, he was satisfied, as tribute, with a levy of Armenian cavalry which he took to Thrace to be used in his wars.<sup>27</sup>

But, aside from these feudal levies, Byzantine armies included a large number of Armenian soldiers, either volunteer or mercenary, assembled from the Armenian provinces or those parts of Armenia which had come under the domination of the Persians and Arabs. These regions supplied

Byzantium some elite regiments. The Armenian nobility gave Byzantine armies a considerable number of officers and a few of its most illustrious generals. For greater details on this subject see the chapter on Armeno-Byzantine relations in this work.

Finally, as we have stated, the Arab Caliphs used the restless and warlike Armenian nobility against, for instance, the Emirs of Kurdistan and Azerbaijan who showed tendencies of secessionism. The greatest service which the Armenian army brought to the Arabs was its participation in the Arab wars against the terrible Kazars, a Turanian tribe which was settled in north Caucasus as far as the Don River, which, at the instigation of Byzantium, made frequent raids on Arab possessions. In the wars of 717, 722, 727, and 813, the Armenian regiments played a decisive role beside the Arabs in expelling the Kazars from the Transcaucasus and driving them out of the Caucasian mountain chain.

In conclusion, it might be stated that the military qualities of the Armenian people during the four centuries following the fall of Armenia's independence played an essential role, and it was chiefly due to these qualities that Armenia, under the guidance of her nobility, succeeded in defending her religion and in preserving a regime in which, although having ceased to be an independent state, continued to survive under the form of autonomous princedoms, the property of great princely families.

The following resume of Laurent's excellent work on Armenia under the Arab domination is a summary of the military history of the Armenians during that entire period:

"The Armenians kept themselves perpetually armed. This mode of existence, even after insuring for them extensive conquests and a large empire, had been unable to save them from foreign domination, and yet, under all kinds of regimes, it had ren-

<sup>26</sup> Raffi, *Samuel*, Paris, 1924, Vol. II., pp. 249-250.

<sup>27</sup> Sebeos, p. 35.

dered them exempt from submitting to limitless tyranny and oppression. The Arabs resigned their idea of subduing by force a people which was so well armed. Because the Armenians exerted their entire energy and resources for the defense of their country. The topography of their land facilitated this task. Armenia was covered with high mountains, criss-crossed by deep valleys, rich in precipitous high cliffs where impregnable positions were many. Armenia became the Arabs' permanent residence only in a number of cities in the valleys of the Araxes and the Euphrates. The Armenian nobles abandoned, for instance, the City of Tovin. Everywhere else they were the masters of the land, organized for a fierce resistance. They lived in steep castles, perched among rocks and mountains, real eagles's nests, where they were immune to the attacks of the Arabs, and where they preserved their intimate life, their treasures and their military preparations. Some of these fortresses were built to accommodate and to feed the entire neighboring population in times of long sieges. Armenia was a gigantic fortress consisting of manifold fortifications. To conquer it was a difficult task, something which the Arabs had failed to accomplish, much the same as their predecessors, during their domination. The Armenians were formidable fighters, otherwise they would have been unable to keep the greater part of their national territory. Because they never could muster as many soldiers as the Arabs, the Armenian army represented a force of no more than 15,000. A mass levy of the peasants would no more than raise that figure to 40,000. This was not enough to defend such a vast region against the cupidity of all the neighbors, against the armies of the Caliphs unleashed against them countless times (these armies sometimes numbered 100,000), and against the attempted blows of the Arabs

in their daily life, the same Arabs who were settled in the various parts of the land as owners and as administrators. The Armenians contrived to survive these difficulties thanks to their daring and their ingenuity. They spent their lives clambering over mountain and valley, hastening to the aid of endangered places, or entrenched in their eagle's nests, waiting to recover what had been taken from them."<sup>28</sup>

### Economic Aspects

In the reign of the last kings of the Arsacid dynasty, as well as during the rule of the Sassanids, Armenia continued to play an important role as a center of commercial exchange between east and west. After the division of Armenia, in accordance with the treaty between Byzantium and the Sassanids, the cities of Artashat, Theodosiopolis (Erzeroum) and Nisibis were to become exchange centers with a sort of monopoly on the trade of silk. As known, during this period it was only the Far East and Central Asia which produced this important merchandise which was transported to Europe through Persia and Turkestan via the famous route whose terminal was Armenia (Ecbatana-Gandja-Artaxata-Erzeroum-Caesarea).

In the sixth century Emperor Justinian tried to break up this economic importance of Armenia, as well as that of the Sassanids upon whom Armenia depended, by opening a new route through Abyssinia but the attempt was a failure. Procopius mentions the City of Tovin as one of the important commercial centers between Asia and Europe.

This privileged position of Armenia as a great emporium of silk was broken only when silk industry was introduced into Syria and the Middle East and the new supply diminished the quantity of exchange between Europe and Asia.

<sup>28</sup>Laurent, pp. 51, 52 and 55.

During the third and fourth centuries import and export was controlled by the Jews who had immigrated to Armenia after the dispersion of their people. They lived in the cities where they represented an important segment of the middle class while the Armenians, almost wholly, were the nobility and the peasantry.

A great change took place in the latter half of the fourth century, during the wars of king Sapor against Armenia. These intensive wars devastated the cities which wasted away and lost their importance as trade centers, at least insofar as the local or the internal exchange was concerned. Presently there evolved a primitive system of the closed economy in which, each region and each city had to be self-sufficient. On the other hand, the Sassanid king, after his occupation of Armenia, took with him the Jews who now were forced to abandon the cities which were ruined in great part, and to settle in Persia where the king wanted to centralize the commerce and develop the trades.

After their departure, Armenia, thanks to her privileged position, was again able to play an important role in the transit trade between Europe and Asia. On the contrary, due to the development of the closed economy, the local exchange was reduced to a minimum; each village and even each family supplied what was absolutely necessary for their needs. This evolution, as well as the insecurity of the country and the successive wars and insurrections of the fifth century reduced the number and the importance of the cities.

The Arab domination was characterized by their insatiable cupidity. They imposed on all the countries under their domination steadily rising taxes which were to be paid, not in native products, but in money. The principal taxes assessed by the Arabs were the poll tax, imposed on all the in-

habitants (with the exception of the nobility and the clergy), and the tax on real estate. Aside from these, the nobility and the church were obliged to pay a special tax. In the latter half of the eighth century, Armenia (including the land of the Aghwans — modern Azerbaijan which at the time was a part of Armenia) paid to their Arab masters an annual tribute of ten million drachmas, the modern equivalent of two million dollars.<sup>29</sup>

These interminable and extravagant demands of the Arabs, and the fact that the taxes and the tribute had to be paid in money, forced the Armenian nobles and the peasantry to abandon their self-supporting economy and to increase their agricultural production which they sold in great marts to raise the necessary funds.<sup>30</sup>

This situation, in turn, gave rise to the development of markets, namely, the revival of the cities. It is from this date that we see the rise of new cities, such as Kars, Bitlis and Akhlat which sprang up alongside the old cities of Van, Artaxata (Artashat), and Theodosiopolis (Erzeroum). Another result of the Arab exactions was the development of Armenian production in agriculture, the mines, the trades and the industry, which later, during the Bagratid Kingdom, reached their peak and provided the material resources which were to serve as the basis of the beautiful civilization which was the pride of the Armenian Kingdom of Ani.

Thanks to the labor and the talents of the Armenian people, Armenia gradually was converted into a country which, by the testimony of Arab chroniclers, it became one of the richest parts of the Caliph's empire. Armenia exported to Baghdad not only cattle, but also grains, fish

<sup>29</sup> Sorian, *Die soziale Gliederung des armenischen Volkes im Mittelalter*, Leipzig, 1927, p. 62.

<sup>30</sup> Sorian, p. 64.



and the salt of her mines, which was sent as far as Syria and Egypt.

The gold mines of antiquity having been drained, the silver mines were now exploited in order to obtain the necessary precious metal for the payment of the tribute.

In the field of industry, Armenia became the center of production of textiles and dyes, a product which enjoyed a great reputation in the whole of the Arab east. The center of textiles was Tovin while the center of the chemical industry, where the dyes and the textiles were prepared, was Artaxata which the Arabs called "The city of red dye" (Karyat al-Kirmit). As a matter of fact, a number of colors are derived from the word Armenia, such as the word "Carmin."<sup>31</sup>

Lastly, it should be noted that the Arab domination marked the beginning of a serious transformation, not only in Armenia but in the whole of the east. Hypnotized by currency, and forgetting that production is the only true source of wealth, the Arabs neglected the care of the irrigation network which, nevertheless, was the basis of the land's agriculture. From the Assyrians to the Sassanids, all the conquering peoples of the east had made the care of the irrigation system the principal object of their concern, whereas during the period of Arab rule the irrigation networks began to deteriorate, and this was the beginning of a disastrous development. It was the Turanians, in reality, who later gave the death blow to the prosperity of that region, by massacring the population and by ruining, often systematically, the irrigation system. By doing so, they ruined one of the richest sections of the globe.

#### Social Aspects

The social structure of Armenia preserved a remarkable stability during the

centuries. What had been in existence in the days of the last Arsacid kings remained intact during the Persian and Arab dominations, continues so until the period of the Bagratid kingdom, and began to disappear only in the eleventh century, namely, with the Turanian invasions.

Aside from the estates of the church which was considerable, the land belonged to the nobility. The peasants had been reduced to the status of serfs. The structure of the land was wholly feudal, a social order which does not consist of a community of individuals but of a class association of privileges. "In the Armenian society the rights were the privilege of those who were a part of the feudal army (namely the nobility). Established on the hereditary ownership of the land, a sacred concept for the Armenian organization, the rights of each were proportional to the extent of their ownership."<sup>32</sup>

But the distribution of the land was unequal among the landowners. Indeed, the nobility itself was divided into three classes. First was the petty nobility consisting of the freemen (The Azatani) each of whose members had a small estate or burg. Immediately above them came the Baron or Nakharar who, aside from his private estates, had sovereign power over a whole canton. The petty nobility of the canton were his vassals and at the same time they were his escort, his small army. These Nakharars were the central element of the Armenian feudal system.<sup>33</sup> They were the natural chiefs of all the freemen in their cantons and their commander in battle. This feudal force under the command of each Nakharar numbered in several hundreds. When the Nakharars had need of a greater number of soldiers they issued a call to the peasants of their estates and those of their vassals who, in times of

<sup>31</sup> W. Warfield, *The Gate of Asia*, New York, 1916, p. 280.

<sup>32</sup> Laurent, p. 60.

<sup>33</sup> Laurent, p. 61.

universal conscription, supplied a sort of army.

In his canton the Nakharar was absolute master. The canton was his property. He was supreme magistrate with the power of life and death. Even in the times of the kings, he never surrendered this right to lower and higher justice to his sovereign<sup>34</sup>

As regards the right to the succession, the eldest son of the Nakharar inherited his father's political power. He came into possession of the most important segment of the canton which included the family residence, the bishopric and the family cemetery. But often efforts were made to extend the estates of the other sons at the cost of the family estate, a condition which promoted endless decimations.<sup>35</sup>

Finally, above the Nakharars were the high nobility, the *Ishkhans* or princes each of whom owned and governed an entire province consisting of several cantons. The Nakharars were subject to the princes. Those provinces formed the Armenian principalities, or princedoms, headed by great families such as the Mamikonians, the Rushunis, the Ggunis, the Arzrunis, the Bagratids, the Kabsarakans and the Siunis who continued an autonomous existence during the domination of the Persians and the Arabs.

In the higher nobility it was the eldest son who inherited the government of the province. The province was not divided and partitioned among the several brothers. Nevertheless the right to ownership of land, prevalent among younger sons of the Nakharars, later left its effect on the higher nobility, at least in the case of the Bagratids and the Arzrunis when they acquired the royal crown. It was thus that their kingdom in the tenth century was divided, to the great misfortune of Armenia which

needed unity more than any thing else.

This feudal society which we have described embraced the entire Armenian population with the exception of the clergy and the bourgeois of the cities. Indeed, alongside with and outside of the feudal world there were the cities. Since antiquity (probably since the days of King Vagharshak II) Armenian cities enjoyed administrative autonomy with their own militia commanded by their proper chiefs. Armenian feudal lords (the Nakharars) had no authority over the fate of the cities, neither their militia, nor their organization nor their daily life. Only the Ishkhans or princes, the chiefs of the provinces or principalities, "had sufficient military and political power to exert effective influence on the bourgeois and the clergy of the cities, and in case of necessity, to demand their financial and military contribution."<sup>36</sup>

The inhabitants of the cities (the bourgeois), the merchants and the artisans, therefore, were freemen. The same was true also of a part of the workingmen. The other part, those who worked in the mines or in other agricultural pursuits, consisted of serfs.

Finally it should be noted that the big taxes levied under the Arab domination gave rise to a movement of centralization in the estates of large landowners, namely the nobility. Crushed under the weight of excessive taxation, many noble families were forced to turn to wealthier families or those who had been favored by the Arabs, with the result that both the power, and often new estates, were accumulated in the hands of a small number of noble families.<sup>37</sup>

This evolution limited the parcelling of lands, as well as the diffusion of the power which for a long time had been charac-

<sup>34</sup> Tournebize, *Political and Religious History of Armenia*, Paris, 1900, p. 82.

<sup>35</sup> Laurent, p. 63.

<sup>36</sup> Laurent, p. 57

<sup>37</sup> A. Sorian, *Die soziale Gliederung des armenischen Volkes im Mittelalter*, Leipzig, 1927.

teristic of the Armenian feudal system. It also paved the way for the revival of Armenian power by virtue of concentration of the means which were destined soon to give birth to the new kingdom of the Bagratids.

### Cultural Aspects

Neither the Persian domination nor the Arab conquest arrested the intellectual and artistic activity of the nation. The division of Armenia into eastern and western segments in the fifth century brought about, as Adontz writes, the cultural division of Armenia, the result of the difference between Byzantine and Persian dominations.<sup>38</sup> But if this division entailed great disadvantages, it also had its advantages and perhaps it had a certain effect on the role which the Armenians played in architecture, a subject which we will develop in our next section.

In the field of letters we have already mentioned the work of Sebeos, the Armenian bishop of the seventh century, on the wars of Emperor Heraclius and the Arab invasions. To this should be added the works of Hovnan Mamikonian.

Aside from the works of Moses of Kalankat who wrote the history of the Albans (Aghvans) and Leontius (Ghevond) who wrote the history of Arab wars, mention should be made of the work of Catholicos Hovhannes III, a trained mind who has bequeathed to us writings which are full of erudition. He is the author of church canons and canonical letters which endowed the Armenian church with a canonical law. Hovhannes III was a prudent prince of the church. He succeeded in establishing friendly relations with the Arab Caliphs and obtained distinct privileges for the church and the nation.

Mention should also be made of the great epic poem entitled "David of Sas-

soun" which extols the feats of Armenian heroes in their fight against the Arab rule.

Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that, at a time when the court of Baghdad and the Arab civilization were reaching their peak and when the West, under the kingdom of Charlemagne, was scarcely extricating itself from the ravages of barbarian invasions, Armenia's association with the Arab empire contributed to the development and the fulfilment of Armenian culture. As H. Focillon observes, in the domain of the arts, "proximity counts more than friendship. The Arab domination of Armenia should be interpreted not as a phenomenon of rupture but as an occasion of exchange and penetration."<sup>39</sup>

The Arab influence, along side the continuing influence of Christianity and Byzantium, paved the way for the beautiful efflorescence of the Bagratid era; it helped Armenia acquire its unique character which was to last for centuries—the synthesis of east and west, the point of union between two cultures. These cultures in Armenia complemented, instead of opposing each other.

### Armenia's Role in the Creation of Christian Architecture

Next to the conversion to Christianity, Armenia's most important contribution to civilization is in the domain of architecture which is the truest expression of a people's soul. It is in this area that the Armenian people has best played the role of intermediary between east and west. It is in this domain that they have displayed their genius and creative faculties with greatest force and originality.

The great Austrian historian of the arts Strzygowski has brought to light Armenia's contribution in this field by dedicating one of his principal works to Armenia's architecture and its relations to Europe.<sup>40</sup> He

<sup>38</sup> N. Adontz, *L'Arménie à l'époque de Justinien*, Saint Petersburg (in Russian), pp. 2-4.

<sup>39</sup> Preface to the work of Baltrusaitis.

produced this work after a long journey into Armenia in 1903 where he was greatly aided by Thoros Thoramanian, a splendid and erudite Armenian architect to whom his country owed so much. Strzygowski showed what the architecture of the east owed to Armenia which, it should not be forgotten, until the appearance of the Roman architecture in the west in the eleventh century, was the dominant architecture of Christianity. It is in Armenia, he says, that one should look for the origins of the Christian architecture of the east. It is there, he says, that in our search for the Christian art, "we find a solid ground under our feet for the first time."<sup>41</sup>

It is known that, in its beginnings, Christianity was little inclined toward the arts in which it saw a bastion of paganism—a school of idolatry and immorality. But in the course of time, especially with the adoption of Christianity as the national religion of Armenia and later of the Roman empire in the fourth century, there was a great revival in religious architecture. Peoples and monarchs wished to demonstrate their attachment to the new religion by the grandeur and the splendor of the buildings which they dedicated to the church.

In the Roman empire and in Constantinople these churches were inspired primarily by ancient architecture. The greater part of the churches were based on the model of the basilica for a long time. It was only in the latter part of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth centuries that there emerged a series of new forms among which should be mentioned the dome over a square plan, the principle of a church with a central plan, the cupola over the basilica, and many other forms which revolutionized Christian architecture and gave rise to the so-called Byzantine architecture

which was to dominate the religious art for centuries.

Strzygowski shows in his work that Christian architecture owes to Armenia a number of her creations and innovations. In his opinion, Armenia and Persia became for the architecture of the Christian world what Greece had been for the architecture of the ancient world. Being in constant touch with pagan Persia and her pagan architecture which for centuries utilized the cupola and whose form, it should be noted, was related to the sun worship of Zoroastrianism, Armenia borrowed this element from Persia. As the first country to proclaim Christianity its official religion, Armenia was one of those countries where building churches took an early start. In the words of Texier, "The influence of Christianity on Armenian architecture is a manifestation of a veritable national inspiration."<sup>42</sup>

Drawing on Strzygowski's conclusions, Charles Diehl tells us that, during the splendid blooming era of fourth to seventh centuries, in the architecture of Armenia we come across domed temples, be it with a single nave or a triple nave (Tonnenbau), but especially we find there the manifold applications of the cupola on a square plan (Zentralbau und Zentralkuppel). New forms are born of the cupola shaped nave and the dome, such as the triconque, the cupola-basilica (Langsgerichtete Kuppelbau), the Greek cruciform plan and the single nave culminating in cupola (Kuppelballe).

As Strzygowski notes, all these creations took place during the period which saw the invention of the Armenian alphabet when Armenia liberated herself from the supremacy of Greek and Assyrian languages. These creations in the domain of the arts represent the victory of the national trait

<sup>40</sup> J. Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst der Armenier und Europa*, Vienna, 1918, 2 volumes.

<sup>41</sup> Strzygowski, p. 877.

<sup>42</sup> C. Texier, *Description de l'Arménie, la Perse et la Mésopotamie*, Paris, 1842, Vol. I., p. 100.

over the Greek and Assyrian influences which had been dominant in Armenia until that time.

It was from Armenia, writes Strzygowski, that the cupola went to Constantinople, Greece, the Balkans, and then to Italy and southern France, to reach northern Europe via the Rhone and the Rhine.<sup>43</sup> Beginning with the fifth and sixth centuries, it was Armenia which gave Byzantine art the models of its most celebrated monuments. It was in the Armenian school of architecture, according to Strzygowski, that the architects of Saint Sophia were trained. That unique work, in regard to whose cupola Procope wrote that, because of its technique and daring, "It looks more like it were hung from heaven than resting on walls," is considered by Strzygowski as a genuine Armenian church (Rein Armenisch).<sup>44</sup>

Byzantium which knew well the inspiration and the technique which created that masterpiece, was not mistaken. When in 989 the earthquake ruined the dome of St. Sophia, it was from Armenia that Byzantium brought the man who was to reconstruct it, the great architect Tiridates who was the builder of the magnificent cathedrals of Ani and Akin.

Again, according to Strzygowski, the builders of Germing-les-Pres, Michel Angelo and Bramante with their St. Peters, and Vignole of Gesu were remote disciples of Armenian architects. "When in St. Sophia of Constantinople and St. Peters of Rome (centers of the Orthodox and Catholic churches) we admire the application of the domes which have attained highest perfection, we must remember that without the labor of leading Armenian architects, the construction of such two architectural

masterpieces would probably have been impossible."<sup>45</sup>

Another great historian of the arts, Charles Diehl, would not accept all the conclusions of Strzygowski, at least where in he is inclined to regard Armenia as the precursor of Christian architecture. As was to be expected from the author of so many splendid works on Byzantium, Charles Diehl considers Constantinople as the spot where the Christian art of the east was first born, with the synthesis of Hellenic, Armenian, Persian and Syrian elements.

Diehl nevertheless accepts the merits of Strzygowski as the man who acquainted the world with Armenia's share in the creation of Christian art. This role, he says, is explained by Armenia's position relative to Persia, her early conversion to Christianity, as well as the talent of her architects. "Armenian architects," he writes, "were incomparably skillful specialists. Living in a land where stones were plentiful, they developed the art of stone cutting with exceptional skill. Tireless travelers, everywhere they learned something new and they carried their methods wherever they went."<sup>46</sup>

Diehl extols the incontestable service which Strzygowski rendered to the history of art, by acquainting the world with the manifold monuments in form and type which attest the blooming of Armenia's splendid art," and concludes that henceforth Armenia must be given her rightful share in the creation of Christian art.<sup>47</sup> "It would not be superfluous to repeat," he says a little later, "all that Byzantium owes to this powerful artistic movement." But the great historian continues to think that it was in Constantinople where the various component elements of the Christian art of

<sup>43</sup> J. Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst der Armenier und Europa*, pp. 604-605.

<sup>44</sup> J. Strzygowski, *Ursprung der christlichen Kirchenkunst*, Leipzig, 1920, p. 39.

<sup>45</sup> J. Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst der Armenier und Europa*, II., p. 747. See also F. Nansen, *Gjennem Armenia*, Oslo, 1927, pp. 18-19.

<sup>46</sup> C. Diehl, *Manuel d'Art byzantine*, Paris, 1925, p. 336.



the east met together, were co-ordinated and were merged. This is why, in his opinion, Constantinople should continue to preserve its just right as the cradle of that art.

As to the eminent historian of the arts, Henry Focillon, he appraises the scope of Strzygowski's labors on Armenian Architecture in following words: "Armenian art aroused the interest of Strzygowski and the importance which this scientist attaches to the creation of the forms which prevailed during the beginning and the course of the Middle Ages is well known. After regarding the Armenian architecture a Byzantine provincial art for a long time, we are led to see in it, if not the disseminator of the essential elements, at least the original cradle, endowed with a great power of radiation. It was not in Constantinople alone that we meet architects of antiquity, but even farther and over a long period, such as in the lands of the Dniester and the Sereth."<sup>48</sup>

Among the masterpieces of Armenian church architecture, a few of which have been preserved to this day but others are in ruins, following may be mentioned: first the Cathedral of Etchmiadzin which dates

from the fifth century but was restored in the seventh century. From the sixth century we have the churches of Ashtarak, Avan, Eghivard. From the seventh century, St. Gregory of Tovin, Saint Rhipsime of Vagharshapat, the Cathedral of Ani, the Church of Mzchet, St. Gaiane of Vagharshapat, the churches of Bagaran, of Alaman, the Zouartnotz, and the churches of Talich and Talin.

The Armenian Catholicoses, who succeeded each other at the head of the Armenian Church, were the inspirers and the organizers of this great enterprise of construction. Worthy of special note among these is Catholicos Nerses III whom the Armenian people honored with the title of "Shinogh", (The Builder).

The monuments still standing on the Armenian highland are testimony of the original contribution which the Armenian people brought to the wealth of culture, without which our world would have been poorer or less perfect. They prove that, if Armenia was often the extreme frontier of western culture in the direction of Asia, she also knew how to become the cradle of new cultural forms for the western world.<sup>49</sup>

(To be continued)

<sup>47</sup> C. Diehl, "L'Architecture arménienne aux VI et VII siècles", *Revue des Etudes arméniennes*, Paris, 1921.

<sup>48</sup> Preface to the work of Baltrusaitis.

<sup>49</sup> On Armenian architecture, see the study of A. Khachatryan, (Vostan, No. 1).

# *The Song of a Mad Girl*

LAURA BARDAKIAN

*Sad is the song.*

*You hurt me first then turned your back;  
the cotton-music in my soul  
you made it turn into salol,  
and when I softly spoke to you  
again you hurt me, once more—two.*

*In this curt life wherein we're cast,  
which is not ours to last,  
you turned your back and stole away  
to beckoning voices from here and there  
and never once you looked my way;*

*and having done this  
why do you linger*

*the tinkle you hear is naught  
but the sick autumn leaves that rustle,  
the shrunk, anemic leaves  
that fall and hustle.*

*With every fall a portion breaks—  
one silly, crooked portion!*

*You found the roaring splashing tides  
and flung the Past to brutal waves  
that drowned the whole but tossed me to  
the shore—*

*although my eyes the blue waters quaffed  
and quelled burned much much less  
than their fall on the last ashes of the fire  
you knocked and quenched.*

*The heat consumed within the ashes cold;  
while when it burned, it glowed and  
warmed.*

*And your back turned,  
you trampled over me and left.  
With deafened ears I tried to heed  
a voice, a word, a whisper clear  
and did not cry  
for in my heart a foolish song*

*burst out and beat;*

*each bitter note carved one more wound  
the scars of which Time would not heal;*

*and having done this  
Why do you linger*

*it is the wind that whines  
and curses the wheezing leaves that pile.  
It blows a blow to the blown  
that fall and die.  
With every blow a fragment flies—  
a crippled, funny fragment!*

*Then worst of all, more painful still  
than all the rest  
was that moment when face to face we met,  
as we did cross each one a way,  
you lashed my words with three sharp  
whips:*

*"I know you not" you said.*

*I could have talked to you  
but I would not—  
so suddenly the song burst and wailed so  
loud  
within the bare walls of my heart  
it hurt. . .*

*Believe me friend, believe it hurt!*

*and having said this and done much more  
why do you linger on grounds so sore*

*the funny, foolish rusty scraps  
that split and strip under your feet,  
and haphazard meet,  
are naught but autumn leaves—  
how clumsy now that they are sick;  
and fallen thus, how rough, how weak!*

Nothing much here.  
 The cotton-music that lulled  
 and swayed to the breeze of the spring air  
 chided and shrank into a mooring scale,

and the wind that blows  
 on each leaf that falls  
 brushes through me  
 and hums as if it groans—  
 Sad is that song.

### SOME "HISTORICAL INACCURACIES"

#### IN REVIEW ARTICLE POINTED OUT

##### To the Editor:

In H. Babesian's twin articles: *The Cathedral of Etchmiadzin, and Early Christianity in Armenia*, in the Winter, 1960, issue of the Armenian Review, I have noted the following historical inaccuracies:

1. On page 105, in paragraph 2, reference is made to the City of Artimed, having been destroyed in the days of King Arshak II by King Sapor (Shapur) of Persia but which was rebuilt by Statius Priscus, the Roman Governor of Cappadocea, in 162 A.D.

King Sapor II reigned in the fourth century A.D. (309-379), and the beginning of King Arshak is placed about 350 A.D. It is absurd, of course, that a city destroyed in the fourth century could have been rebuilt in the second century.

2. On page 106, top of column 2, it is stated: "Although at first the Cathedral of Etchmiadzin was called *Shogbakath* (later it was called *Etchmiadzin*)." Again, on page 109-110, it is stated: "And although the Cathedral at first was called

*Sourb Astvatzatzin* (The church of the Holy Mother of God), in later years it took the name of Cathedral of Holy Etchmiadzin."

Of these two versions the latter is the correct one. Shoghakat is an entirely different church, dedicated to Virgin Mariane who was martyred.

3. On page 108, column one, reference is made to the town of Artaz in the Plain of Ararat. There never was any town called Artaz, either in the Plain of Ararat or anywhere else. Artaz was a county in the province of ancient Vaspourakan.

4. On page 107, column 2, in a list of Catholicoses who sat on the Throne of Etchmiadzin, included are: Hovhan Odznetsi, Petros Getadartz, Grigor G. Pahlavouni, Nerses Shnorhali (Nerses the Graceful), Grigor Tgha, and Grigor Apirat. None of these men sat on the Throne of Etchmiadzin, and as to Grigor Pahlavouni, Nerses Shnorhali and their successors were Catholicoses of the Great House of Cilicia and they never even saw the face of Etchmiadzin.

KOURKEN DER VARTANIAN

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